The Waterboy

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OPEN ON:

EXT. BAYOU - DAY (AERIAL SHOT)

WE PAN up and over a vast expanse of swampland. On the edge of the swamp, WE SEE a huge college football stadium. A sign out front reads: "UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA, CAVANAUGH MEMORIAL STADIUM, HOME OF THE COUGARS."

INT. STADIUM - DAY

The stands are empty, but there's a lot of activity on the field: huge football players practicing, as well as various workers, assistants and hangers-on.

Quick shots of the following: a player talking on a cel phone as he gets a rubdown from a trainer; an assistant coach getting a video printout of an offensive formation; a massive, 'roid crazy linebacker (TITO) tearing apart a tackling dummy; and a scowling running back ignoring a group of autograph-seeking kids. It's big-time college football at its worst.

Strolling across mid-field, in the midst of all the activity, is a gruff middle-aged man in a sweatsuit: RED BEAULIEU. He is talking to an assistant coach, LASKI.

RED
How'd Newton do on the forty?

LASKI
Four point eight seconds. That kneecap hasn't quite healed yet.

RED
Cut his ass.

LASKI
If we cut him, we waste a scholarship.

RED
Don't be stupid, Laski. We gonna revoke that boy's scholarship. Pre-existing injury, blah-blah...

LYNN SWANN, former pro player and now a TV sports reporter, approaches Red and Laski. Red's demeanor instantly changes as he extends his hand to Swann.

RED
Lynn Swann, you ole polecat! Shoulda known you'd come sniffin'
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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RED (cont'd)
around here the first day of practice!

LYNN SWANN
Team's lookin' good this year, Red. Maybe you can add another national championship to the trophy case.

RED
Well, likes my pappy always used to say, "the only thing better than a catfish dinner is five catfish dinners!"

As Red and Swann laugh, we PAN to a dark tunnel emerging from the bowels of the stadium. Out of the darkness comes a young man. He's holding a water nozzle in his hand, which is attached by a black hose to a huge water tank he has strapped on his back. Hanging off his tool belt are a bottle of purification tablets, a thermometer, a can of sterno and a dixie-cup dispenser. It is the Waterboy, BOBBY BOUCHER.

Bobby stops, takes a dixie cup from his belt, squirts in some water and takes a drink. He swishes the water around in his mouth, then swallows. He's pleased.

BOBBY
(speaking, as always, with a slight stammer)
Now that's high quality H20.

Bobby gets hit in the head with a football. He's dazed for a second, but then recovers. He points to the football as he shouts off into the distance.

BOBBY
It's over here!

Several huge players laugh derisively at Bobby.

Back at mid-field, Red is holding court with Lynn and some other reporters.

RED
I mean, the Alabama game is gonna be a dogfight, and playing at Penn State - that's scarier than poison ivy in an underpants factory. But if we get past those two, I figure we'll do alright...

CONTINUED:

Over on the sideline, Bobby walks over a table where he has an incredibly elaborate water-dispensing system set up: four hundred plastic "Cougar Football" cups on multi-tiered platforms, hand-lettered signs around the table reading "WATER STATION", three coolers marked "Distilled Water", "Spring Water" and "Rain Water", and a suggestion box. A player runs over.

BOBBY
Welcome to the water station. You must be a freshman. I'm Bobby.

Bobby extends his hand, which is ignored. The player grabs one of the cups.

BOBBY
Taking a water break? That's a good decision. The human body can lose up to 1.2 gallons of water in an hour of vigorous athletics. Now to avoid the risk of dehydration, you oughts to sip that water, cause sipping allows the body to assimilate...

The player looks at him like he's insane, then chugs the whole cup.

BOBBY
Or gulp it, sip or gulp. The important thing is that you're drinking plenty of crystal clear--

The player throws the empty cup at Bobby, hitting him in the head, and runs back on the field.

BOBBY
--water. Good luck!

Back at midfield, Red is ogling some cheerleaders. Swann gestures to a thick, ancient looking green notebook Coach is holding.

LYNN SWANN
You have any plays we haven't seen yet in that legendary green notebook of yours?

This gets Red's attention. He instinctively clutches the notebook tighter.

CONTINUED:

RED
Oh, there may be a few special ones I got squirrelled away for a rainy day...

Over on the sideline, Bobby opens up the suggestion box.

BOBBY
Let's see what we got in here...

Bobby pulls out three slips of paper: they read, "PLEASE KILL YOURSELF", "EAT SHIT" and "WATERBOY, YOU ARE THE MOST USELESS HUMAN BEING ALIVE."

BOBBY
Not exactly what I'd call constructive criticism--

Suddenly, a meaty arm grabs Bobby from behind. It's GREG MEANEY, a huge defensive tackle with a distinctive "Fu Manchu" mustache. Greg grabs the nozzle out of Bobby's hand and squirts him, laughing.

GREG
Ha-ha, have some water, water boy!

Greg pushes Bobby, who falls to the ground.

BOBBY
You know, wasting water, even if it's in good fun, is bad policy...

GREG
Well, you smelt like you could use a shower... dummy.

This word seems to go through Bobby like an electric shock. He suddenly shows a flash of real anger.

BOBBY
I'm not a dummy, I'm smarter than you.

GREG
What was that, waterboy?

As quickly as it arrived, the anger disappears.

BOBBY
Nothing. That shower was actually quite refreshing...

Back at mid-field, the reporters are walking away.

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CONTINUED:

RED
(waving)
See you fellers...

Red notices a group of BEAUTIFUL CHEERLEADERS passing by. They all look glum and dejected.

RED
Hey, girls! Why y'all so sad? Cheerleaders are s'posed to be cheery.

CHEERLEADER
We're not cheerleaders. Those are the cheerleaders.

She points to a group of EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL CHEERLEADERS, in tight outfits, doing very athletic moves.

CHEERLEADER
Tryouts were today, and none of us made the squad.

RED
Wow. Well, it's a damn shame to let your... talent go to waste... Tell you what: since y'all got so much school spirit and whatnot, we're gonna find a way to keep you around our team this year.

The reject cheerleaders jump up and down, very excited.

RED
Yeah, that's right, yahoo...

CHEERLEADER
What are we gonna be doing, Coach Beaulieu?

RED
(to himself)
Hmmmmm....

Red hears a commotion. He turns and sees a bunch of players laughing as Bobby gets doused even more by Greg.

CUT TO:

A close-up on Red's face. He shakes his head in disgust...

FUZZY DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STADIUM - DAY - FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

A younger-looking Bobby is carrying a tray of water cups. Superimposed on the bottom of the screen is "1993".

A player trips Bobby, and the tray goes flying. A younger-looking Red, watching nearby, shakes his head in disgust.

FUZZY DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STADIUM - DAY - FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

An even younger-looking Bobby is taste-testing a cooler of water. Superimposed on the bottom of the screen is "1988".

A player throws water on Bobby's pants, making it look like he peed himself. An even younger-looking Red, watching nearby, shakes his head in disgust.

FUZZY DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STADIUM - DAY - FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Bobby is being dunked headfirst into a cooler of water by several laughing players. Only his legs are visible. Superimposed on the bottom of the screen is "1983".

A young Red, in a skinny tie, is watching nearby. He shakes his head in disgust.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

INT. STADIUM - DAY

CLOSE UP on Red's face, perplexed.

RED
(to Laski)
What's that moron doin' back this year? I thought I told you to fire him last year - and the year before, and the year before that.

LASKI
I didn't think you were serious. That guy does a great job.

RED
He does a great job distracting my team! They spend more time thinkin' about ways to abuse him then they do thinking 'bout football!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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RED (cont'd)
(to reject cheerleaders)
Ladies, guess what? Y'all are gonna be the new Cougar "Watergirls".

The girls squeal with delight, and hug and kiss Red. Red calls out to Bobby.

RED
Hey, waterboy!

Bobby, who's about fifty yards away, is watering some dandelions with his nozzle. He doesn't hear Red.

BOBBY
(to dandelions)
I know you fellas need some water too...

RED
(fifty yards away)
HEY, WATERBOY!

Heads turn throughout the stadium. Bobby looks up.

BOBBY
YES, MR. COACH BEAULIEU?

RED
YOU'RE FIRED!

Everyone in the stadium stares at Bobby.

BOBBY
OKAY!

EXT. STADIUM - DAY

Bobby walks dejectedly past the Porsches and Mercedes in the "Players Parking Lot" to a John Deere riding lawn mower. He gets on, starts it up (it's very loud) and heads out of the parking lot at about 10 miles per hour.

ROLL CREDITS

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Young children are holding their ears and laughing at Bobby on his mower as he drives by.

EXT. ANOTHER ROAD - DAY

Some teens in a car try to run Bobby off the road.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - SUNSET

Bobby is driving out of town into a much more rural area. He drives across a grassy shoulder, leaving cut grass in his wake. Old men playing checkers on a porch look at Bobby and shake their heads.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - SUNSET

Bobby drives past an old, overgrown sign (featuring a smiling crawfish) which reads, "WELCOME TO JACKSON'S BAYOU, LOUISIANA: THE HEART OF CAJUN COUNTRY."

END CREDITS

We hear even louder engine noise. A young woman on a motorbike, VICKI VALLENCOURT, has pulled up beside Bobby. She's smoking a cigarette. They putter along, side by side, shouting to be heard over the din of their vehicles.

VICKI
Hey, Bobby! When you gonna get a car?

BOBBY
Mama don't want me drivin' no car! Besides, this baby gets me where I want to go, nice and safe at six m.p.h.

VICKI
Whatever. How's the waterboy business?

BOBBY
Not too good! I was fired by Mr. Coach Beaulieu!

VICKI
Oh my god! I hate that guy! You want me to burn his house down for you?

BOBBY
No, I don't think that'll help! Besides, you better not burn any more houses down, or you'll have to go back to jail!

They ride past a dumpy produce stand. An old man stacking tomatoes, FARMER FRAN, waves to Vicki and Bobby. (Note: Farmer Fran speaks in an unintelligible Cajun accent).

CONTINUED:

VICKI
Hi, Uncle Fran!

FARMER FRAN
Gananu, mayofay! Yobey gedda howaffa demskeetas gitchy!

Farmer Fran laughs at his (apparent) joke.

VICKI
(not sure)
Okay, Uncle Fran!

Bobby and Vicki ride on.

VICKI (cont'd)
Any ideas about a new job?

BOBBY
I don't think Mama's gonna want me to get another job! She likes me to be around the house!

VICKI
Thst's crazy! Bobby, you're thirty-one years old! How can you stand living in that house with her tellin' you what to do all the time?

BOBBY
I'm quite happy there. Sometimes Mama gets cranky, but I know that nobody will ever care for me as much as Mama does.

VICKI
How do you know that?

BOBBY
Uh... Mama said so.

Suddenly, a REDNECK watering his lawn nearby yells at Bobby.

REDNECK
Hey imbecile! Nice lawn mower! Ha-ha-ha!

VICKI
(to Redneck)
Hey, shut up, asshole, or I'll
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

VICKI (cont'd)
hang your dog while you're asleep tonight!

The frightened Redneck looks at his dog. The dog looks at the Redneck. Both are concerned.

VICKI
You gotta stand up to your Mama, Bobby! I know, you're a Virgo, and Virgos don't like confrontation! But you can't keep on livin' like this!

The sound of a siren suddenly rises above the engine din. A police car is right behind Bobby and Vicki. They stop, the car stops, and two cops get out: DEPUTY LOUGHRAN AND DEPUTY JACK.

DEPUTY LOUGHRAN
Vicki Vallencourt? We need to talk to you about a stolen motorcycle.

VICKI
Whatever.

The cops cuff Vicki, and start leading her away. Deputy Jack takes the motorbike. Nobody acts that surprised.

VICKI
Alright, Bobby, I'll see you in a week to ten days.
(being pushed into squad car)
Good luck with your Mama!

INT. MAMA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

A heavily-made-up woman is cheerfully chopping up a really huge catfish in the kitchen of a ramshackle house. It's a fiftyish lady with bright red hair, MAMA BOUCHER.

She hears the buzz of the lawn mower approaching, and smiles warmly.

EXT. MAMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Bobby parks the mower outside a dilapidated clapboard house on the edge of a murky swamp. A very active bug zapper is on near the house. Bobby goes inside.

INT. MAMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Bobby enters the crazily-decorated living room; there's junk everywhere: animal pelts, traps, etc. In the corner of the room, a mule (STEVE) is eating some hay.

BOBBY
Mama, I'm home!

Mama pokes her head out of the kitchen area.

MAMA
Bobby Boucher! As I live and breathe! Come give Mama a kiss!

Bobby goes over and gives Mama a peck on the forehead. She continues chopping.

MAMA
Why you home so early, my precious angel?

BOBBY
I... I got some bad news, Mama.

Very concerned, Mama reaches out and starts stroking Bobby's cheek with one hand while brandishing the cleaver with the other.

MAMA
Did they hurt you, baby? Who hurt you? You tell Mama who hurt you!

BOBBY
Nobody hurt me, Mama. But I lost my job.

MAMA
Well, that's the best news I've heard in a dog's age! Now you're finished with all that foolishness in town, and you can spend your days at home where you belong.

BOBBY
(very softly)
But I don't want to do that. I want to get another waterboy job.

MAMA
Don't you raise your voice to me, Bobby Boucher!

CONTINUED:

BOBBY
I wasn't raisin' my voice, Mama. I don't like confrontations: I'm a Virgo.

Mama looks at Bobby suspiciously.

MAMA
Who told you you were a Virgo?

Bobby is snagged.

BOBBY
(looking straight down)
That girl... Vicki...

MAMA
Bobby Boucher, don't you remember what Mama told you about girls?

BOBBY
I remember, Mama...

FLASHBACK-Y DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MAMA'S HOUSE (1977) - DAY

Young Bobby is watching a younger Mama take the guts out of a moose.

YOUNG BOBBY
There was someone else down at Lawson's Creek this morning.

MAMA
Really?

YOUNG BOBBY
We looked for crawfish together. Her name's Vicki.

Mama stops what she's doing and stares daggers at Young Bobby.

MAMA
A girl? I don't ever want you associatin' with little girls.

YOUNG BOBBY
Why not, Mama?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAMA
Cause little girls... ARE THE DEVIL!

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

INT. MAMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Bobby is standing next to Mama.

BOBBY
Mama, it's just that I... I'm a waterboy. When the players get thirsty, I give them the water. They need the water, and I like to give it to them...

MAMA
Lord above, I cannot stand another instant of this nonsense! Owwww!
(grabbing her head)
My head! All your foolishness has triggered another brain pain...

Bobby helps Mama to a chair.

BOBBY
I'm sorry, Mama...

MAMA
Owwwwww!

Steve the mule looks up.

MAMA
Bobby, I know you mean well, but you ain't the brightest boy in the world. You need to stay close to home.

BOBBY
(burying anger)
Yes, Mama.

MAMA
Now go out and do your chores, and then you can go to bed. Owwwww!

EXT. MAMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Bobby is emptying bugs out of the bug zapper. He's muttering to himself.

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CONTINUED:

BOBBY
Not the brightest boy in the world...

Bobby punches the tree the bug zapper is hanging off of.

The tree cracks.

Bobby sees a huge boar on the lawn, staring at him.

BOBBY
What are you looking at?

Bobby sees a half-eaten cucumber in the boar's mouth.

BOBBY
That's one of Mama's cucumbers! You musta stole it from her garden. You think I wouldn't notice that? You think I'm stupid or something?

The boar, sensing danger, starts running away.

Bobby takes off after it, running with amazing speed, and tackles it. Bobby pulls the cucumber out of the boar's mouth; the boar runs away whimpering.

Bobby grabs the cucumber and takes a bite.

INT. MAMA'S ROOM - MORNING

Mama is lying in bed, snoring something fierce. Bobby is standing over her, wearing a light blue polyester suit.

BOBBY
(whispering)
Mama, is it okay if I go look for another job?

Mama snores. It sounds like it might be a word.

BOBBY (cont'd)
Was that a "yes"?

Bobby looks over at Steve the mule. Steve nods, "yes".

BOBBY (cont'd)
I thought so. Okay. Bye.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

Bobby drives past a sign reading, "Lafitte College."

INT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE - DAY

A man is sticking his head out of a door which reads, "Athletic Department." He's talking to Bobby.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE COACH
Sorry, buddy, we already got a waterboy.

The door slams shut.

EXT. ANOTHER COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

Bobby drives past a sign reading, "Giddens Bible College."

INT. BIBLE COLLEGE - DAY

A man is sticking his head out of a door which reads, "Football" He's talking to Bobby.

BIBLE COLLEGE COACH
I'm afraid we don't have any openings right now, son. But God bless you.

The door slams shut.

EXT. ATHLETIC FIELD - DAY

A bunch of 7-year-olds are playing in a Pee-Wee football game. Bobby walks over and hands a cup of water to one kid. The kid's mother drags him away, scared.

EXT. COLLEGE - DAY

Bobby drives past a weathered sign reading, "South Central Louisiana State University."

INT. ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Bobby walks down a dingy basement hallway to a darkened office. A sign on the door reads, "S.C.L.S.U. FOOTBALL - Keith Klein, Head Coach." Bobby knocks.

MALE VOICE
(from inside office)
Come in.

INT. COACH'S OFFICE - DAY

The only light in the office comes from a silent game film being projected against the far wall. A lone figure sitting in a chair can be seen in silhouette, staring at

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the film. After a beat of silence, the figure begins narrating.

MALE VOICE
This is where the other team strips the ball away from our receiver -- there it is, and now we miss one tackle, then another and... yes, one more tackle, and now the runner has room to run -- but he drops the football - whoops! Now check this out: the runner has time to pick the ball up, dust it off and run in for a touchdown before any of our guys know what the hell is going on. Hey look, there's me, breaking into tears...

In the film, COACH KLEIN, a weary-looking man in his fifties, is on his knees, punching the ground.

MALE VOICE
...At this point, we're losing 51 to 3, so I suggest it might be time to stop filming the game...

On screen, Coach notices the camera and mouths, "Stop the fucking camera!" several times.

Then the screen goes blank, and the room is filled with the sound of the film going "snap-snap-snap" against the projector.

The figure turns off the projector and turns on a light. It's Coach Klein.

COACH
Hello there. Nice suit.

BOBBY
Thank you. My name is Bobby Boucher, and I am inquiring as to whether you have need for an experienced waterboy for the upcoming season.

COACH
Well, we don't have a waterboy. In fact, we've never had a waterboy...

CONTINUED:

BOBBY
That, sir, if I may be so bold, is a huge mistake. A continuous supply of clean, cold water is a must for any strenuous activity, especially football. Without it, an athlete may experience fatigue, cramping, headaches, nausea, disorientation, unconsciousness or death.

COACH
Wow. That's scary.

BOBBY
I didn't mean to frighten you. I came up with a little motto during my tenure at the University of Louisiana--

This piques Coach's interest.

COACH
You worked at Louisiana? For Red Beaulieu?

BOBBY
For the last eleven years, sir.

COACH
Red's an old acquaintance of mine. We were assistant coaches together, way before your time...

BOBBY
That's nice. Anyways, the motto I came up with is, "keep it clean and keep it cold." That pretty much sums up my philosophy on--

COACH
Mr. Boucher, there's no way I can hire a waterboy.

Bobby is crushed.

COACH
I can't even afford assistant coaches. For water, I usually just drag out this old cooler myself...

CONTINUED:

Coach indicates a battered old plastic jug. To Bobby's horror, the water in the jug is dirty, and has little bugs floating around in it. Bobby, fixated, tunes out Coach.

COACH
...You see, college football teams are supported by "boosters" - wealthy alumni who contribute so they can feel they're part of a winning team...

As Coach talks, he gets a cup of water from the jug. Bobby is mesmerized with dread.

COACH
...But if your team hasn't won a game in five years, the boosters ain't exactly crawling out of the woodwork...

Just as Coach is about to take a sip of water,...

BOBBY
I'll do it for nothing! You don't have to pay me! Just please, put the cup down! Please...

Coach slowly lowers the cup from his lips.

BOBBY
That's it...

Bobby gently pries the cup from his fingers, like a cop taking a gun away from a madman, and puts it on the desk.

COACH
Okay. Practice is at 3:30, Monday thru Friday. You can bum some cups off Mrs. Hansen in the cafeteria.

BOBBY
Thanks, Mr. Coach.

Bobby leaves.

COACH
Man, that kid really loves water.

FADE TO:

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

Coach Klein is putting the S.C.L.S.U. Generals through their paces on the team's uneven, muddy practice field. The players trot around lackadaisacally, like they'd rather be somewhere else.

Quick shots of the following: the cheerleaders (not an attractive bunch) doing a simple dance step as they pass around a bottle of Mad Dog; the team's quarterback, GEE GRAHAM, missing an open receiver by ten yards; a player taping up his hands with transparent Scotch tape; Coach diagramming a play with a stick in the dirt; and a player tackling a duffel bag, which opens up, spilling laundry on the field.

The team's nose tackle, POOT JENNINGS, runs over to Coach.

POOT
Hey Coach, some of us wanna practice fumble recoveries. Is it okay if we use the ball now?

COACH
The offense is using the ball for another ten minutes. Then you can have it...

On the nearby sideline, Gee is wiping his sweaty face with a towel. He turns around - and Bobby is right there. He has a red plastic gas jug tied to his back, with some heavily patched garden hose coming out of it. Bobby tries to hand Gee a squirt bottle.

BOBBY
(stammering alot)
H-h-h-here you, you, you go. I-I-I-I-I--

Gee laughs derisively and runs back onto the field.

Bobby shrugs and walks away. He walks over to a makeshift table, where there are thirty battered styrofoam cups and the team water jug (now scrubbed clean), which is marked "Tap Water (more varieties to come...)" Bobby's smiling in spite of the depressing surroundings, happy to once again be doing his life's work.

WE PAN over to the scrimmage. Gee is eyeing Bobby with an evil smile on his face. He walks to the huddle.

CONTINUED:

GEE
Did y'all get a load of the new waterboy?

The other players look over at Bobby, who is examining a cup of water with a magnifying glass. They scoff.

GEE
Let's make him feel right at home. Jerry, you go right. Casey, you go left...
(smiling)
Way left...

The huddle breaks, and everyone assumes their positions. The ball is snapped, and Gee fades back to pass. CASEY, the team's flanker, is streaking toward the left sideline. Gee lofts the ball - right towards Bobby and the water table.

Casey and the ball arrive there at the same time - destroying the table and knocking Bobby on his ass.

Everyone laughs - especially the cheerleaders, who seem kind of buzzed.

Bobby picks himself up and surveys the damage.

BOBBY
(to himself)
The more things change, the more things stay the same...

Coach doesn't see this; he's engrossed in a book which he is very surreptitiously reading. CUT TO REVEAL the title: "The Complete Idiot's Guide To Coaching College Football."

Coach looks up to see a black player with sunglasses, DEREK WALLACE, jogging by. He quickly hides the book.

COACH
Derek, where were you? Practice started a half hour ago.

DEREK
I'm sorry, Coach, but there was an emergency. My girlfriend was, like, buggin', jumpin' up and down, slapping me, acting like a crazy bitch.

CONTINUED:

COACH
It seems like your girlfriend often acts like a crazy bitch. Maybe you two should call it quits or something.

DEREK
Why you say that, Coach?

COACH
Well, maybe she is a crazy bitch.

DEREK
Don't be saying that shit, Coach. That ain't right.

COACH
Sorry. Just go over there and practice punting.

Derek looks at Coach dubiously.

COACH
Well, pretend you have a ball.

Derek jogs off.

COACH
(to himself)
We have one lousy scholarship, and we give it to a kicker...

Derek comes over to where Bobby is now using Sterno to boil water.

DEREK
(coldly)
Yo, water's better cold.

Bobby's a little apprehensive.

BOBBY
Uh, I know. In fact, that's kind of my motto - "keep it clean and keep it cold." But this is the only way to make sure it's purified. Like Mama always says, better safe than sorry.

DEREK
(warmly)
That's what my mama says, too.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

DEREK (cont'd)
Aren't all mamas the same? Let me know when it cools down, baby.

Derek jogs away. Bobby smiles; he's made a friend.

The cheerleaders are still practicing the simple dance step, but now are falling into one another and giggling.

LYLE, the team's cross-eyed outside linebacker, sneaks up behind Bobby, grabs the sterno, and puts it up against Bobby's rear end, burning it. Bobby yelps.

LYLE
Whoops! Sorry about that... Doctor Dope.

Lyle laughs.

Bobby stares at him, anger in his eyes.

FLASHBACK-Y DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STADIUM (1983) - DAY

Teenaged Bobby is stirring a vat of water with a giant wooden spoon. Suddenly, a huge player spits in the vat.

EIGHTIES PLAYER
(laughing)
You forgot one ingredient, Doctor Dope!

The Player starts walking away, chuckling. But Bobby raises his fist and throws a punch right at the back of his head.

But a meaty hand catches Bobby's arm in mid-air. It's Red.

RED
Are you crazy, boy? Throwin' a punch at one of my players?

BOBBY
(almost crying)
But he called me ...

RED
I don't care what he called you. He is a finely-tuned athletic machine, and you are a half-wit waterboy. What if you hurt him, and he couldn't play next week? Don't you ever, <u>ever</u>, touch a player. You hear me, boy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Teenage Bobby nods tearfully.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

The anger subsides from Bobby's face. Coach walks over.

COACH
Hey, Lyle, cut it out. Bobby here has volunteered to be our waterboy this year. The least you can do is treat him with a little respect. Are you okay, Bobby?

Bobby has a big burnt-out hole on the seat of his pants, exposing part of his ass.

BOBBY
Nothing hurt except my pride, Coach.

Lyle and his cronies laugh. Coach pulls Bobby aside.

COACH
Look, you're going to have to stand up for yourself here, Bobby. I'm not telling you to go on a shooting rampage, but... it's okay to defend yourself.

BOBBY
But they're finely tuned athletic machines...

COACH
Just do something, or they'll ride you all season - believe me, I've seen it before.

Coach walks off, towards the Cheerleaders.

COACH
Girls, can we lay off the hard stuff until the season starts?

DRUNK CHEERLEADER (O.C.)
Stick it up your ass!

COACH
Stick it up my ass, great...

CONTINUED:

GEE
HEY, MORON!

Bobby looks up. Gee is out on the field, about to run a play. The whole team is laughing.

GEE (cont'd)
(doing Bobby impression)
Duh, look at me, I'm the idiot waterboy! Duh...

Quick flashbacks race through Bobby's mind, including Greg, the mean lineman...

GREG
Thought you could use a shower, dummy.

The Redneck...

REDNECK
Hey imbecile! Nice lawn mower! Ha-ha-ha!

Lyle...

LYLE
Whoops! Sorry about that, Doctor Dope.

...and Gee.

GEE
Duh, look at me, I'm the idiot waterboy! Duh... Duh... Duh...

As the last flashback fades away, Bobby's eyes narrow to slits.

Bobby's mouth forms an evil sneer.

BOBBY
(under his breath)
I ain't dumb...

Bobby runs onto the field as the practice play unfolds. He's making a bee-line straight for Gee.

Coach watches, amazed.

CONTINUED:

He blasts through the offensive line, dodges a blocker and tackles Gee with unbelievably savage intensity, driving him fifteen feet.

Bobby gets up. He's very embarassed.

BOBBY
I...I...I'm sorry.

The Trainer gives Gee some smelling salts, and he comes to.

GEE
Who dat? Who dere?

Everyone stares at Bobby, in total shock. Bobby looks at Coach apprehensively.

BOBBY
I slipped!

INT. COACH'S OFFICE - DAY

Bobby, still in his uniform, is talking to Coach.

BOBBY
I'm sorry. I don't know what happened out there...

COACH
Bobby, what I just saw out there was amazing. Now I'm gonna hit you with an idea, and I want you to consider it very seriously.

BOBBY
Yes, Coach.

COACH
I want you to join the team. I want you to play football for us.

Bobby's eyes widen and he starts stuttering extra hard.

BOBBY
Football? I can't play football, Coach!

COACH
You just did. C'mon, we need all the help we can get!

CONTINUED:

BOBBY
Coach, I don't think the team... they don't... I...

COACH
Look, Bobby, I know the team hasn't been very welcoming. But I know exactly how you feel. When I was younger, the kids in the neighborhood liked to pick on me, too...

FLASHBACKY DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET (1949) - DAY

A frizzy-haired kid, presumably YOUNG COACH, is walking down the street. Then he trips over someones leg which is sticking out from a bush. A couple of BROOKLYN KIDS pop out from behind the bush.

BROOKLYN KID
Hey, Klein, have a nice trip?

YOUNG COACH
Not particularly.

BROOKLYN KID
You wanna make something of it, you pencil-necked geek?

YOUNG COACH
No, I was just... I mean, as far as trips go,... it wasn't a nice trip, per se...

The meanest kid jumps on top of Young Coach and starts slapping him. Young Coach doesn't fight back.

BROOKLYN KID
C'mon, Klein! Be a man! Fight back!

But he doesn't.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

INT. COACH'S OFFICE - DAY

Bobby is paying rapt attention to Coach.

COACH
That's what it was like every day.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY
That sounds similar to my experience at my old job. And I never fought back neither. Mr. Coach Beaulieu told me not to.

COACH
Red's players picked on you as bad as the guys did today?

BOBBY
Worse.

COACH
Wow. That's eleven years of repressed anger - or "tackling fuel", as we will now refer to it.

BOBBY
Well...my Mama, she wouldn't let me play no football.

COACH
Fair enough. You and me will go home and talk it over with Mama.

BOBBY
(distressed)
But Mama says, Mama, Mama says, Mama says, Mama says...

Coach waits patiently.

FADE TO:

INT. MAMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Coach, Mama and Bobby are seated at the kitchen table, eating some of Mama's Special Gumbo.

MAMA
I don't like it, Mr. Coach, don't like it one bit. My boy is too delicate play "foosball", or whatever you call it, with those gargantuans.

Mama reaches out and strokes Bobby's hair. Coach takes a big bite of Mama's Special Gumbo.

COACH
I understand your concern, but--
Wow! Hot! Hot food! Whoa!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Coach is in obvious distress from the spicy gumbo.

COACH
Sorry. Look, Bobby here's small enough to get around those big linemen, but still the most powerful tackler I've ever seen. He's the ultimate football weapon!

Mama stares at Coach.

COACH
So are we agreed then?

MAMA
(slamming fist on table)
No!!!

Steve the mule looks up, startled, from the bowl of gumbo he's eating.

MAMA
(getting emotional)
Mr. Coach Klein, you don't understand: I need my boy at home! He's all I got left!

Bobby comforts Mama.

BOBBY
It's alright, Mama...

MAMA
(to Coach)
You see, my husband Randy... One morning in June of 1968, with me four months pregnant with this angel, he decided that he wanted to help foreign peoples, so he was gonna join the Peace Corps. I cried and cried, but he promised that everything would be okay - just like you're promising now. But everything wasn't okay; he got lost in the Sahara desert, and he died!

BOBBY
He couldn't find no water, Coach. He died of dehydration...

CONTINUED:

MAMA
And we were left all alone.

BOBBY
(more upset)
I would have gotten him some water. But I was just a little baby inside of Mama's stomach...

MAMA
Now you want to take the only part of my Randy I got left.

COACH
Well, don't you want your son to get a college education?

BOBBY
Me? A college student?

Coach, sensing an opportunity, seizes it.

COACH
Think about it, Mrs. Boucher: with an education, Bobby can write his own ticket.

BOBBY
Boy, that sounds nice, Mama... A college man...

MAMA
I don't know...

BOBBY
Mama don't know, Coach.

COACH
(frustrated)
Mrs. Boucher, your son is 31 years old. Don't you think he should be making up his own mind?

MAMA
He does make up his own mind. I don't tell him what to do. You wanna go to college, Bobby?

Bobby, pressured, hesitates for a beat, then...

BOBBY
Yes, Mama. I'm tired of everybody callin' me a dummy.

CONTINUED:

Mama is shocked by this answer, then...

MAMA
Owwwwwww! The brain pain! The worst ever!

Mama stands.

MAMA (cont'd)
I'm going to my room, prob'ly to die! Owwwww!

Mama goes to her room. Bobby goes to follow, but Coach grabs his arm.

COACH
Let Mama have her rest, Bobby. She's just excited for you.

Bobby, confused, sits back down.

Mama, peeking in from a crack in the door, fumes.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

Derek booms a massive punt. It rolls to a stop sixty yards away, near some students.

DEREK
Yo! How 'bout a little help! Could ya toss me the ball?... Roll it over?... Damn...

The students ignore him, and Derek disgustedly runs to fetch the ball.

DEREK
(muttering)
Football team's really big shit on this campus...

PAN TO the other side of the field. Gee and the offense are lined up. The ball is snapped - only there's no ball.

Gee fades back and pretends to throw to Casey, who pretends to catch it.

GEE
Did you drop it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CASEY
No, I swear, I made a great catch!

GEE
I think you dropped it...

As they continue arguing, WE PAN TO Poot and Lyle on the sideline. They are watching something, shaking their heads with great disgust.

PAN TO REVEAL it is Bobby, who's lugging the team jug over from the cafeteria. He's wearing a ridiculous, over-padded uniform, and holding his helmet.

LYLE
I don't want that ass on the team. Everybody's gonna laugh at us.

POOT
Everybody's already laughing at us; we haven't won a game since 1994.

Bobby walks over to Poot and extends his hand.

BOBBY
My name's Bobby.

Poot and Lyle laugh and walk away, leaving Bobby hanging. The other players point and whisper. Bobby shrugs and walks over to Coach.

BOBBY
There was a malfunction in the cafeteria refrigerator last night, so the water's running about 57, 58 degrees. The way I figure it, you got two options: a, cancel practice; b, postpone to late afternoon, give the ice some time to work its magic--

COACH
I think we'll be alright. Just put that jug down.

As Bobby does, Coach blows a whistle, and the team slowly gathers round.

COACH
Alright, first of all, an announcement: water will be on a
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

COACH (cont'd)
"serve-yourself" basis for the rest of the day...

BOBBY
Remember, sip not gulp.

COACH
Also, we have a new player on the team, Bobby Boucher, who will be playing some linebacker for us.

The team grumbles. Gee murmurs to Casey.

GEE
(doing stuttering Bobby impression)
"W-w-would you mind if I tackled you, s-s-s-sir?"

COACH
He put you on your ass pretty quick, Gee.

The team "oooooos" as Gee fumes.

COACH (cont'd)
Alright, I wanna work with the offense and the defense; special teams, do some laps.

DEREK
Shit.

Derek, the only special teams player, jogs off alone.

The offense and defense line up in formation. Coach guides Bobby to the linebacker's position.

COACH
Alright, it's third down and ten, so...

Bobby raises his hand.

BOBBY
"Third down and ten?"

The team reacts, disgusted.

COACH
Uh, it's like the offense's last chance to gain ten yards before they have to punt. Now Gee's gonna run the option...

CONTINUED:

Bobby raises his hand again. Coach rolls his eyes and walks over to Bobby.

COACH
Come on, Bobby, you waterboyed for eleven years. Didn't you occasionally... watch the game?

BOBBY
Oh no, I had plenty to keep me busy, refilling cups and whatnot, not much time for game watchin'.

COACH
Alright, we got alot of work to do. For now, let's just keep it simple: tackle Gee, like you tackled him yesterday.

Bobby gives thumbs-up. Coach steps back.

GEE
21! 19! 35!...

COACH
Bobby! Put your helmet on!

Bobby does.

GEE
...hut-hut-hike!

The ball is snapped. The defense blitzes. Gee fades back in the pocket.

Bobby trots away from the play, zig-zagging around by himself.

Coach realizes...

COACH
He can't see...

WE SEE a closeup of Bobby. He's cross-eyed.

BOBBY'S POV

Everything is blurry - except for the facemask which is right in front of him. He's focusing on that.

REGULAR POV

CONTINUED:

COACH
Don't be afraid to use all your strength. Lyle is very resilient.

Bobby half-heartedly pushes against Lyle, who doesn't move.

COACH
Alright, that's enough.

Bobby releases Lyle and starts running for the sidelines.

COACH
Where are you going?

BOBBY
I was going to check the water temperature. You want some?

COACH
Just get back here.

Bobby runs back.

COACH
Alright, look. Is there any sport you do watch, any physical sport like hockey or boxing...

BOBBY
Wrestling.

COACH
Terrific, wrestling. Now who's your favorite wrestler?

Bobby thinks about this for a long beat.

BOBBY
I'm gonna have to say Captain Insano.

COACH
Okay, right now, I want you to do to Lyle what Captain Insano would do to a bad guy.

Bobby thinks about it for a second.

BOBBY
Right now?

COACH
Yes. Now. Go.

CONTINUED:

Bobby walks over to Lyle, stares at him, then pokes him in the eye. Lyle doubles over.

GEE
He poked me in the eye!

BOBBY
Captain Insano shows no mercy.

Coach puts his arm around Bobby.

COACH
(trying hard to be patient)
Where's that intensity I saw yesterday, Bobby? How come you're not using your tackling fuel?

BOBBY
I'm not really sure how to, Coach.

COACH
Well, why don't you pretend Lyle is someone that you're mad at?

BOBBY
Pretend?

COACH
Yeah. Just visualize someone you're mad at, then attack. Visualize, then attack. Think you can handle that?

BOBBY
I'll try.

COACH
(walking away)
He'll try, terrific...

Bobby steps back and looks at Lyle for a beat, then...

WE SEE BOBBY'S POV of Lyle, who just looks sullen and bored. But then Lyle's face morphs into Gee's, and Gee says...

GEE
What you waiting for? You too st-st-st-stupid to do what Coach says?

REGULAR POV

CONTINUED:

BOBBY
(angry)
No...

LYLE
(confused)
"No" what?

Bobby takes off and boom! Lyle is levelled with a lightning-fast hit. Bobby snaps out of it.

BOBBY
I'm sorry, I didn't mean to hit you, Coach told me to pretend...

Coach runs over.

COACH
That's it! That's what I want you to do every game! Can you do that for me, Bobby?

BOBBY
Coach, not only will I do it, I... yeah, yeah, yeah, I'll do it.

FADE TO:

EXT. CAMPUS QUAD - DAY

Bobby looks around the campus in happy wonder, holding a bunch of books, as he proudly climbs the marble steps into a building with Derek.

BOBBY
I wish Mama could see this place.

DEREK
Yeah, me too. But my mama's afraid to get on an aeroplane. Calls 'em "devilmobiles."

BOBBY
Mine too!

Bobby and Derek enter the building.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Students are filing into the amphitheatre-like classroom. Bobby looks kind of nervous.

CONTINUED:

DEREK
Why'd you pick this class, anyway?

Bobby points out the window. Derek sees that there is an impressive view of the big fountain in the campus quad.

The bell rings, and Derek leads Bobby to a seat.

The PROFESSOR, an angry man in his seventies who looks and dresses like Colonel Sanders, turns from the blackboard to face the class.

PROFESSOR
Alright, y'all shut up. Now last week, we were talking about the physiology of the animal brain as it relates to agressiveness. Who can tell me why most alligators are abnormally agressive?

Bobby is the only one to raise his hand.

PROFESSOR
Yes?

Bobby stands.

BOBBY
Mama says that alligators are ornery cause they got all them teeth but no toothbrush.

Bobby sits down, satisfied.

The class laughs. The Professor scratches his head.

PROFESSOR
"Mama says... that alligators are 'ornery' cause... they got all them teeth... but no toothbrush..." Wow.

ANOTHER STUDENT raises his hand.

PROFESSOR
Yes?

ANOTHER STUDENT
Alligators are agressive because of an enlarged medulla oblongata, the sector of the brain which controls agressive behavior.

CONTINUED:

PROFESSOR
That's correct. The medulla--

BOBBY
But Mama says...

The Professor stares Bobby down, then continues.

PROFESSOR
The medulla oblongata is where anger, jealousy and agressiveness originate. Now the brain...

As the Professor continues, Bobby sits in a state of shock, devastated.

BOBBY V.O.
(in his head)
Mama? Wrong?

FLASHBACK-Y DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MAMA'S HOUSE (1975) - DAY

Mama is reading a book aloud to Bobby.

MAMA
"The three main classes of rock...
(reading with difficulty)
...are sed-i-ment-ary, ig, ig-ne-ous and..."

Mama looks up at Bobby, smiles, then skips a few pages.

MAMA
That's not important.
(reading again)
"The seven continents were at one point all attached together" - my, isn't that interesting! - "but drifted apart over millions of years due to shifts in the...
(again reading with difficulty)
...tec-ton-ic plates and other sei, seissss, seis-mic..."

Mama abrubtly closes the book.

MAMA
Baby, most of this book learnin' is just a waste of time. Just
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAMA (cont'd)
remember this: a rock is harder than a piece of wood, but you can't burn a rock, no matter how hard you try.

YOUNG BOBBY
Okay, Mama.

MAMA
Good, very good! Okay, time for recess: Mama's gonna comb your hair!

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Bobby snaps out of it as the Professor asks a question.

PROFESSOR
Now who can tell me where happiness comes from?

Bobby raises his hand. Derek grabs it and tries to pull it down, but Bobby keeps it up.

PROFESSOR
Anyone?

Bobby is the only one with his hand up.

PROFESSOR
(sighing resignedly)
Alright, let's hear what Mama has to say about it. You, sir.

BOBBY
Mama says that happiness comes from magic rays of sunshine that come down when you're feeling blue.

PROFESSOR
Well, folks, Mama's wrong again...

The class laughs.

BOBBY
No! You're wrong! Mama's right! You're wrong! Mama's right!

Bobby starts running out of the classroom, but the turns around, runs down the steps and tackles the Professor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY
It's okay to fight back! Mr. Coach Klein said I could!

Derek and some other students pull Bobby off.

FADE TO:

EXT. GAME FIELD - DAY

A sparse crowd has gathered to watch the Generals play the LaSalle College Bluedogs. The game field looks like the practice field, only there are some rickety bleachers set up. The cheerleaders are gathered in a circle under the bleachers, swigging from a bottle of Southern Comfort they are passing around.

CHEERLEADER
(to another)
Quit hogging that! Pass it over here!

The few fans look bored and depressed, except for two energetic fellows, WALTER and PACO. Paco is kind of slow, and Walter is kind of mean to him. Their dress and the signs they are carrying indicate that they are the Generals' #1 fans.

PACO
Generals! Kick some booty! Woo!

Walter grabs Paco and yanks him back into his seat.

WALTER
Sit down, jerk. You're making an ass of yourself. "Woo"...

PACO
How come I can't root? You root all the time...

WALTER
Well, I'm good at rooting. You just scream and yell like a monkey or something.

Derek is walking past the water table, where Bobby is busy filling cups.

DEREK
How you doin', baby?

CONTINUED:

BOBBY
Keepin' it clean and keepin' it cold. Hey, you're already sweating! That kind of armpit saturation is an early warning sign of dehydration.
(hands him cup)
Here's some special electrolyte-fortified water.

DEREK
You better stop worryin' about water, baby, and concentrate on the game tonight. Just do what you did to that Colonel Sanders-looking professor and you'll be fine...

Bobby sees Coach standing nearby, talking to a bearded man in a tweed jacket.

BOBBY
Who's that with Coach?

DEREK
Dr. Gilkey. Technically, he's an assistant coach, but he's a psychiatrist. He just comes to games to make sure Coach doesn't get too excited.

BOBBY
Why would Coach get too excited?

DEREK
Didn't you hear, man? Coach had a nervous breakdown, like fifteen years ago. He was out of coaching a long time before he got this job...

Coach is making a point to DR. GILKEY.

COACH
So I think we have a shot today. Bobby's been learning more and more in practice.

DR. GILKEY
And that makes you feel... good?

CONTINUED:

On the field, the referee blows the whistle and the LaSalle kicker boom the ball sixty yards to the Generals' receiver, who is immediately tackled.

COACH
Alright, offense, get out there! Let's get some points on the board!

As Gee is making his way towards the field, he bumps into Bobby hard and laughs as he walks away.

GEE
Watch where you're going, waterchump.

In the stands, Walter and Paco.

PACO
Hey Walter! I bet you fifty bucks Gee Graham throws a touchdown pass on the first play! Check it out!

Out on the field, Gee hands off to Casey, who is tackled in the backfield.

In the stands...

PACO
Ha-ha, you owe me fifty bucks!

WALTER
You said he was gonna throw a touchdown pass, you crazy asshole!

PACO
Don't yell at me!

CUT TO:

Gee calling the signals again. The ball is snapped. Gee attempts a pass, which is intercepted.

Coach shakes his head as Gee and the offense run off the field.

COACH
What happened out there, Gee?

GEE
The same thing that happens every damn week! Your plays are stupid
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

GEE (cont'd)
and boring! A complete idiot could think them up!

Coach gets shifty-eyed.

COACH
Why do you say that?

Lyle, Poot and the rest of the defense run onto the field.

COACH
Alright, defense, let's hold 'em!
(turning to Bobby)
It's showtime, Bobby. Just do like we did in practice.

Bobby gives Coach a thumbs-up and runs out onto the field. The huddle breaks up and Bobby assumes his linebacking position.

BOBBY'S POV

The LaSalle quarterback begins calling the signals.

LASALLE QUARTERBACK
27... 18...

The Quarterback's face morphs into Gee's.

GEE
Hey, st-st-stupid! You got the brains of a bucket of mud!

REGULAR POV

The center snaps the ball to the quarterback. Bobby speed rushes around the left tackle and lays a vicious hit on the quarterback.

The small crowd cheers.

Bobby stands over the dazed quarterback.

BOBBY
You got the brains of a bucket of mud.

Coach is on the sidelines, finally smiling.

COACH
I knew this was a good idea.

FADE TO:

CONTINUED:

TACKLING MONTAGE (Music: CCR's "Born on the Bayou")

1. LaSalle quarterback hands off to a running back, who runs away from Bobby's side. Bobby runs into the backfield and chases him down from behind. Bobby tackles him right out of his shoes.

2. LaSalle runs the same play and Bobby pursues from behind. But the running back hands it off to a wide receiver coming the other way--A REVERSE. Bobby looks on helplessly as the receiver runs around his end for a touchdown. GEE shakes his head.

3. On the sidelines, COACH draws a reverse for Bobby and shows him how to stop it. Bobby nods. He's learning.

4. Bobby tackles the running back, causing a fumble. The crowd roars. Bobby, unsure of what to do, picks up the football and hands it back to the running back. The crowd groans.

5. Cheerleaders watching the game, amazed. Each is holding a liquor bottle of some sort.

6. Bobby tackles someone so hard their helmet pops off and flies out of frame.

7. Coach, with that helmet on his head, happily jumping up and down.

8. Dr. Gilkey is staring at Coach, taking notes.

9. Gee high fives Lyle on the field. Bobby sees this and puts his hand up. He gets iced.

10. All but two of the Cheerleaders are passed out. One survivor turns to the other.

DRUNK CHEERLEADER
You're my best friend.

11. The LaSalle Quarterback and running back keep lateralling the ball to each other, afraid to get hit. Bobby runs back and forth between them. Finally he tackles both.

12. Walter and Paco in the stands.

PACO
Look at Ol' Leatherhead go! He's the smallest guy out there, and he's manhandling the whole team!

CONTINUED:

WALTER
The same way Dad would get drunk and "manhandle" you?

PACO
Shut up! That didn't really happen!

13. Bobby rushes the LaSalle quarterback. There is fear in the quarterback's eyes. He hastily throws the ball away so Bobby won't tackle him. Lyle intercepts and runs it back for a touchdown.

FADE TO:

EXT. GAME FIELD - LATER THAT DAY

The scoreboard indicates a score of 7-7 with thirty seconds to go.

On the field, the Generals have the ball deep in their own territory. Gee calls the signals and the ball is snapped. Gee spots an open man, cocks his arm - and is "sandwiched" by two defensive ends. Gee fumbles, and a LaSalle player pounces on the ball.

Coach reacts.

Bobby runs out to Gee, who's still on the ground, and offers him a cup of water.

BOBBY
You're gonna be fine, Gee. Just drink some of this H2O. I mixed in some salt and sugar to replenish your body fluids.

Gee slaps the cup away.

GEE
Just get out of my face.

Gee gets up and runs off.

BOBBY
I hope I never get so angry I reject the gift of water.

Bobby lines up against a big LASALLE LINEMAN.

BOBBY
Well, good luck, and may the best team win.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LASALLE LINEMAN
(mocking the stutter)
"G-g-g-g-good luck." What a dope.

Bobby frowns.

The ball is snapped, and the quarterback pitches it to the flanker. Bobby comes out of nowhere, and boom! The flanker is levelled and the ball comes loose. Bobby picks it up.

Everyone in the stadium is pointing towards the far end zone and screaming.

But Bobby seeks out the LaSalle Lineman who made fun of him, and tosses him the ball.

On the sideline, Coach, Derek and the offense react.

ALL
No!

In the stands, Walter and Paco are horrified.

WALTER/PACO
Wrong!

Farmer Fran stares in amazement.

FARMER FRAN
On-ion!

On the field, the Lineman smiles and grabs a tight hold of the football - only to be pulverized by Bobby's most punishing tackle yet. The referee blows the whistle. Bobby stands over the Lineman satisfied.

Gee runs up to Coach.

GEE
He gave away the ball! Your jackass waterboy just lost us the game!

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - A MINUTE LATER

LaSalle kicks the game winning field goal.

Bobby is sitting on the bench, his head in his hands. The team is giving him dirty looks.

LYLE
Nice job, shithead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The coach catches up to him.

COACH
Great game Bobby. Unbelievable. You just have to learn from your mistakes.

BOBBY
Coach, everybody hates me. I lost the game.

COACH
That's the closest we've come to winning since I've been here. We'll get 'em next time.

Coach runs off.

EXT. LOCKER ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Bobby emerges from the locker room in his regular clothes. Vicki and Farmer Fran waiting for him.

BOBBY
Vicki, what are you doing here?

VICKI
I was at the game. You were great, stud.

Farmer Fran puts his arm around Bobby.

FARMER FRAN
Eyefeegay satasass yone eh eeyaych yone!

Farmer Fran walks off.

VICKI
I think that was nice of Uncle Fran to say.

BOBBY
I guess...

VICKI
How's about we go grab a burger somewhere?

BOBBY
Mama... she's not a big fan of restaurants, or me going to one...

CONTINUED:

VICKI
Oh.

BOBBY
(with extra stuttering)
But, you know,... Mama sometimes... in the afternoon, she... it's outdoors, and there's food, cooked food, on the grill, and you... I would like you...

VICKI
You want me to come over for a barbecue?

BOBBY
That's it.

EXT. MAMA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Mama is in the backyard at the barbecue grill. She's cooking what looks like baby alligators as she mutters to herself.

MAMA
Havin' people over... Poor Mama's nothin' but a short-order cook to that boy...

Mama eyes Bobby and Vicky, who are at a nearby picnic table, talking. Bobby is "dressed to kill" in his powder blue suit.

MAMA
He never gets all fancy for Mama...

At the table, Vicki is holding forth.

VICKI
The old hag who does astrology for "Good Morning America" ought to pack it in. Here's what she says for Saggitarius: "You will be faced with a difficult decision today." I mean, everyone's faced with a difficult decision every day! That's like writing, "You will breathe today."

Mama comes over with a plate of baby alligators.

CONTINUED:

VICKI
Wow, that looks delicious, Mrs. Boucher.

Mama just smiles and sits down. There's an uncomfortable beat.

BOBBY
Mama, Vicky is an astrologist.

MAMA
That's nice. I don't believe in that sort of thing personally. Astronomy is one of the many tools of the devil. So you're interested in my boy, Miss Vallencourt?

Bobby turns bright red. He stops cutting up his alligator.

BOBBY
Mama, don't... Vicki and I, we... I don't think--

VICKI
I'm very interested in your boy, Mrs. Boucher...

Vicki puts her hand on Bobby's shoulder. Mama fumes.

MAMA
Really? Well, did he tell you about how much his feet smell?

BOBBY
Mama, please...

MAMA
He has to wear two pairs of socks...

VICKI
Men are supposed to have smelly feet.

MAMA
Well, are men supposed to wear pajamas featuring a children's cartoon character by the name of "Hong Kong Phooey"?

BOBBY
Now Mama, that was uncalled for...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VICKI
Hong Kong Phooey is very, very sexy...

Vicki kisses Bobby's cheek. Bobby gets so jittery his fork and knife vibrate in his hands. Mama gets even more mad.

MAMA
Did he tell you about his little bedtime problem?

BOBBY
Oh no, Mama. I'm begging you...

MAMA
Two words: rubber sheets.

BOBBY
If you ladies would excuse me, I'm gonna go drown myself. Bye.

Bobby gets up and starts walking toward the bayou. Mama gets up to follow him.

MAMA
See what you did?

VICKI
What I did?

MAMA
You listen here, cupcake: the only woman in my boy's life is me, and nobody's gonna take him away, especially not a godless Jezebel like you!

Mama turns away and jogs after Bobby.

Vicki sighs heavily, grabs one of the barbecued baby alligators, and bites its head off.

As she's chewing, as shadow falls over her: it's Deputy Loughran and Deputy Jack.

DEPUTY LOUGHRAN
Ms. Vallencourt, a dog was found hung last night and we want to ask you a few questions.

Vicki sticks out her hands to be cuffed.

CONTINUED:

VICKI
Whatever...

INT. ROADHOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE UP on TV, showing ESPN's "SportsCenter". Anchor DAN PATRICK is talking. An SCLSU graphic appears next to his head.

DAN PATRICK (ON TV)
...When we report on the SCLSU Generals, it's usually to add a number to their amazing losing streak, which now stands at 41...

A graphic appears of 4 years of 0-10's, followed by this years 0-1.

DAN PATRICK (ON TV)
...But now we have another reason. In their loss yesterday, a 31 year old freshman linebacker named Bobby Boucher set a new NCAA record by sacking the quarterback 16 times, shattering the old record of 7...

Highlight of one of Bobby's sacks.

DAN PATRICK (ON TV)
Boucher, sporting a throwback look, is also the team's waterboy...

The TV shows a grainy photo of Bobby, in full football gear, pouring cups of water.

PAN AWAY from the TV over to the counter. Red is sitting there, about to bite into a sloppy joe, staring at the TV screen.

DAN PATRICK O.C.
...which, of course, begs the question, "What exactly are they putting in the water down in Jackson's Bayou, Louisiana?" For ESPN SportsCenter, I'm Dan Patrick. So long for now.

The "SportsCenter" theme plays, punctuated by the drip-drip of sloppy joe meat falling from the now-forgotten sandwich

CONTINUED:

in Red's hands onto his treasured green notebook, as he stares slack-jawed at the screen.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

CLOSE UP on scoreboard, which indicates the score of 3 to 3. It's the fourth quarter with 59 seconds to go. We hear the sounds of a football game.

LOCAL SPORTSCASTER V.O.
Folks, we are deadlocked in a vicious defensive battle, and how about the Waterboy: linebacker Bobby Boucher. He's got 11 sacks and 3 caused fumbles. With things going this good for the Generals, who knows, will we see the end of their long losing streak?

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDELINE - DAY

Coach is rallying the troops. Bobby is handing out cups of water to his unappreciative teammates.

COACH
There's forty players on this team, not just one. Bobby can't do it by himself. Okay, let's go!

The defense runs onto the field. Coach pulls Bobby aside, with a crazy look in his eye.

COACH
Look, you're gonna have to do this by yourself. No one else on the team is any good.

Dr. Gilkey runs over and gets Coach in a head lock.

COACH (cont'd)
I'm fine, doctor, I'm fine!

Dr. Gilkey releases Coach, but eyes him warily.

COACH
We have to win this game, Bobby: I can't stand losing anymore - we're so close! Make something happen out there. Remember: visualize
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COACH (cont'd)
then attack. Try to visualize someone really despicable...

Bobby nods and runs out onto the field.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The huddle breaks up, and Bobby and the rest of the defense take their positions. The Vipers have the ball on their own twenty. The VIPERS QUARTERBACK begins his count.

VIPERS QUARTERBACK
36! 19!...

BOBBY'S POV

The Vipers Quarterback's face morphs into GERALDO RIVERA'S.

GERALDO RIVERA
Bobby Boucher: Moron or Imbecile? On the next "Geraldo"...

REGULAR POV

The ball is snapped, and the quarterback locks eyes with the maniacally onrushing Bobby. He fearfully tries to 'zig' (a semicircle) backwards. He turns around and Bobby is still bearing down on him.

BOBBY'S POV

The running Vipers Quarterback's is Geraldo Rivera's.

GERALDO RIVERA
You'll never catch: you're as slow in the feets as you are in the head!

REGULAR POV

The terrified quarterback tries to 'zag', but he is getting dangerously close to his own endzone. As he turns back around to look downfield, he is leveled by Bobby...in the ENDZONE. The referee runs into frame and signals SAFETY.

LOCAL SPORTSCASTER V.O.
The Generals win! The losing streak is over!

EXT. ENDZONE

Bobby is mobbed by his teammates. Fans run onto the field. Gee is the only one not joining in the fun.

Coach comes over, carrying the ball.

COACH
Our first win. You definitely get the gameball on this one, Bobby

Coach hands the ball to Bobby.

BOBBY
Wow.

COACH
Actually, could I borrow that back for a little while? We're gonna need it for practice tomorrow.

Bobby gives the ball back.

Two teamates carry Bobby's water bucket out there and go to dump it over Bobby's head. The celebration stops...

BOBBY
NOOOOOO!!!!!

MUSIC BEGINS: Some great Cajun-themed song T.B.D.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPUS QUAD - DAY

Bobby walks happily across campus carrying a load of books. A graphic below him reads, "OCTOBER".

INT. COLLEGE LIBRARY - DAY

Bobby is studying his "African Folklore" book. He turns the page to find a picture of two bare-breasted tribal women. He shuts the book, embarassed.

PAN TO Farmer Fran, sitting across the table from Bobby. He's reading the same book - and smiling intensely.

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

A large package is delivered to Coach by a UPS GUY. Coach reads the card: "Congratulations on Your Victory, From Your Friends at Gordon's Sporting Goods!"

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Coach opens the box. It's two dozen footballs. Coach does a happy jig.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - LATER THAT DAY

CLOSE UP on scoreboard, which indicates that S.C.L.S.U. has won a game by the score of 6 to 3.

PAN DOWN to Coach giving the game ball to Bobby.

COACH
You can keep this one!

Bobby is happy. He raises the ball in the air and the crowd cheers.

INT. BOBBY'S ROOM - DAY

Bobby puts the game ball on the windowsill in his room.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Bobby and the defense are on the field, in their stances, awaiting the snap.

Bobby sees a player on the sidelines, out of breath.

Suddenly Bobby stands up and calls...

BOBBY
Time!

Bobby runs over to the sideline, right past Coach and over to the water table, where he grabs a cup.

We see a section of fans raise their newest souveneirs, water bottles, as Bobby gives the cup to the out of breath player.

INT. BOBBY'S ROOM - DAY

Bobby puts another game ball on the windowsill in his room.

INT. ATHLETIC BUILDING - DAY

Bobby and Coach sit on a dais, facing about two dozen reporters, including Lynn Swann.

LYNN SWANN
Bobby, how do you feel about following up a 41 game losing streak with a 3 game winning streak?

CONTINUED:

BOBBY
Eh, well, oooo, that, that, that--

LYNN SWANN
Coach, how do you feel about following up a 41 game losing streak with a 3 game winning streak?

Coach is beaming with pride. He's enjoying this.

COACH
Pretty good, Lynn. Most people weren't expecting us to make much noise this year, so we're just trying to take it one game at a time.

LYNN SWANN
Coach, does it bother you that your best player is a guy who would probably flunk out of nursery school?

Bobby scowls.

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

Bobby lines up at scrimmage. The OPPOSING QUARTERBACK is calling the signals.

OPPOSING QUARTERBACK
22! 22!...

BOBBY'S POV

The Opposing Quarterback's face morphs into Lynn Swann's.

LYNN SWANN
Hey, Bobby! How's nursery school going? In over your head a little?

REGULAR POV

BOBBY
(angry)
I'm not in nursery school, I'm in college!

The OPPOSING LINEMAN senses what's coming...

CONTINUED:

OPPOSING LINEMAN
Oh no, I didn't say you were in nursery school! I never said that!
(almost hysterical)
Please don't hurt me!

The ball is snapped, and Bobby attacks.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Bobby is back in the class where the Professor made fun of him. The Professor has two black eyes.

PROFESSOR
Who can tell me how amphibians can breathe both underwater and on the surface?

Bobby raises his hand.

PROFESSOR
Mr. Boucher?

BOBBY
In the reading assignment, it said that amphibians have hybrid organs that perform the functions of both lungs and gills, but Mama says--

PROFESSOR
(cutting him off)
Mr. Boucher, why don't you quit while you're ahead?

Bobby does.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Bobby is trying to read a book and drive his mower at the same time. CUT WIDE TO REVEAL a strip of cut grass behind the mower, cutting across several people's lawns.

A graphic appears below: "NOVEMBER".

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Bobby breaks through the line and blocks a punt. Lyle scoops it up and runs it in for a touchdown.

CLOSE UP on scoreboard, which indicates that S.C.L.S.U. has won by the score of 7 to 0. We see a large, vociferous

CONTINUED:

crowd. Many are waving water bottles. Some are wearing leather helmets.

INT. BOBBY'S ROOM - DAY

Bobby puts the game ball on the windowsill in his room. That makes five.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Derek and Bobby are getting changed in front of their lockers. An army of reporters is listening to Bobby.

BOBBY
When we played in Mississippi, the water was very clear, but slightly acidic, whereas the water at Texas State has a slightly metallic taste, not entirely unpleasant but definitely less refreshing then the water here in Louisiana. But enough about me; my friend Derek here can kick the ball really far...

REPORTER
What's it like playing with Bobby, Derek?

DEREK
Well, he likes water, and he hurts people on the football field...

EXT. MAMA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Bobby is chasing a bear who is holding a cucumber. He tackles the bear and wrests the cucumber away.

BOBBY
You tell your friends: stay away from Mrs. Boucher's garden!

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

CLOSE UP on scoreboard, which indicates that S.C.L.S.U. has won a game by the score of 4 to 0. The noise indicates a huge, sellout crowd.

PAN DOWN TO bleachers, now filled with screaming fans despite the pouring rain, past fans holding signs like "H20 #1", fans beneath "Waterboy" umbrellas and fans wearing those beer-dispensing helmets, only with water bottles instead of beer cans.

EXT. BLEACHERS - DAY

LAWRENCE TAYLOR is addressing a group of kids, all of whom are wearing red "LT's Louisiana Lightning Football Camp" t-shirts.

LAWRENCE TAYLOR
Alright, guys, we have a very special guest today. He plays football right down the road from here in Jackson's Bayou. He's hear to talk about tackling. So give a warm, "LT" welcome to Bobby Boucher.

The kids applaud. Bobby walks over, kind of embarassed.

LAWRENCE TAYLOR
So Bobby, tell us about how you tackle. Are you pursuit-oriented or do you just try to be in the right place at the right time?

BOBBY
Well, the center has the ball, and then when the quarterback says "hike", the center hands it to him, and that's when it's okay for me to start tackling. Usually I try to tackle the quarterback, unless he gives the ball to someone else, in which case I try to tackle that person.

The kids stare at Bobby, dumbfounded by this buffoonery.

LAWRENCE TAYLOR
Which brings up another point, kids: Don't smoke crack.

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

Gee is reading Sports Illustrated. On the cover is a particularly demented photo of Bobby with the caption, "THE TACKLING DUMMY: Can Boucher Lead His Team to New Years Day?" Gee throws it down in disgust.

INT. MEETING HALL - DAY

A bunch of different people are crowded into a meeting hall. A moderator sits in the center of the group.

CONTINUED:

MODERATOR
We have some new members with us today. Would you like to start us off?

From amidst the crowd, a CHEERLEADER stands up (in uniform).

CHEERLEADER
My name is Brandi, and I am an alcoholic.

WIDEN TO REVEAL all the Cheerleaders are there, applauding. Bobby's there, too, holding a Perrier bottle and giving Brandi thumbs-up.

INT. BOBBY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Bobby is watching TV. He's riveted.

ON TV

Bobby's idol, Captain Insano, is wrestling against the Revolting Blob.

WRESTLING ANNOUNCER V.O.
...And Captain Insano could be in trouble... Captain Insano breaks free from the Revolting Blob!...

INT. WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

Captain Insano and the Revolting Blob are circling each other.

CAPTAIN INSANO
How does that Bobby Boucher do this... Visualize, then attack...

CAPTAIN INSANO'S POV

The Revolting Blob's face morphs into CAPTAIN INSANO'S MOTHER.

CAPTAIN INSANO'S MOTHER
I thought I told you to clean your room!

REGULAR POV

Captain Insano charges the Revolting Blob, lifts him up, spins him above his head, then drops him on his knee (the "back-breaker").

CONTINUED:

CAPTAIN INSANO
You clean your room, bitch!

INT. BOBBY'S ROOM - DAY

Bobby puts the game ball on the windowsill in his room, joining the one that is already there. There are now seven.

INT. BOBBY'S ROOM - DAY

Bobby puts the game ball on the windowsill in his room. His collection now totals eight.

INT. BOBBY'S ROOM - DAY

Bobby puts the game ball on the windowsill in his room, making a total of nine.

EXT. CAMPUS QUAD - DAY

Bobby is walking through the campus quad accompanied by a huge mob. He's happily signing autographs. A graphic below him reads, "DECEMBER".

MUSIC ENDS

INT. MAMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mama is in the kitchen, stirring a huge pot that has twelve footballs in it.

MAMA
(to herself)
That boy had some big beans hidden up in his room...

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

CLOSE UP on scoreboard, which indicates that S.C.L.S.U. is tied at 3 to 3, with five seconds left. The noise indicates a massive crowd.

INT. BROADCAST BOOTH - DAY

Sportscasters BRENT MUSBURGER and KEITH JACKSON are calling the game.

BRENT MUSBURGER
What a game! But it looks like the cinderella SCLSU Generals, led by linebacker Bobby Boucher, are going to fall one victory short of
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRENT MUSBURGER (cont'd)
a Citrus Bowl bid. The Georgia State Rebels can win the game by nailing this twenty yard field goal.

KEITH JACKSON
While we're waiting for that injured player to make his way off the field, let's take a look at the way Boucher ended the Vipers last drive.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Freeze-frame overhead shot of the two teams. Bobby is circled by a Telestrator. The shot goes into motion, accompanied by appropriate Telestrator arrows and such.

BRENT MUSBURGER V.O.
Here we see Boucher instantly penetrate the pocket. Now he's trying to figure out who has the ball. He looks to the sideline for a split-second; I'm guessing someone was messing with the water supply or something. But then he spots the Vicksburg fullback, and it's all over. Let's take a look at another angle...

The shot switches to one which shows Bobby angrily running towards the camera in SLOW MOTION. Bobby's face is circled by the Telestrator.

KEITH JACKSON V.O.
There's a lot of pain in those eyes. And boom! There's the tackle. Wow. That's disturbing footage.

BRENT MUSBURGER V.O.
Difficult to watch, Keith.

EXT. STANDS - DAY

Walter and Paco are huddled under a blanket upon which they have written, "GO WATERBOY."

PACO
Generals! Gonna kick some names and take some ass!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALTER
"Take some ass?" What are they, ass bandits?

PACO
No, you are.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Bobby lines up in his position. The opposing kicker signals he's ready.

IN SLOW MOTION

The ball is snapped. In BOBBY'S POV, the blocker's face morphs into the Boar's (with a cucumber in his mouth). Bobby charges.

The holder places the ball down as Bobby penetrates. The kicker kicks the ball. Bobby jumps up, arms outstretched - and catches it. He sprints for the end zone and scores the winning touchdown as time expires.

The crowd explodes.

INT. SPORTSCENTER STUDIO

Dan Patrick is on again.

DAN PATRICK
After their amazing victory yesterday over the Georgia State Rebels, the SCLSU Generals have completed an amazing turnaround, going from 0-41 to 9-1 and a New Years Day date with Red Beaulieu and the Louisana Cougars in the Citrus Bowl. Not only has the Waterboy changed S.C.L.S.U.'s fortunes, he's got other teams looking around the sidelines for talent. Yesterday, Florida State, devastated by injury, experimented with their towel boy at wide receiver...

A highlight of a small guy running over the middle to make a catch. He is clotheslined and hits the ground, knocked out cold.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Someone is hanging up SCLSU's new Citrus Bowl jerseys outside the players' lockers: WALLACE, GRAHAM, BOUCHER...

Somebody knocks over the "Boucher" jersey. It's Gee.

GEE
Retard...

Derek sees him do this.

DEREK
What's wrong with you?

GEE
He's a joke. He makes us a joke. I wish he'd just quit, or get hit by a truck or something...

DEREK
You think we're the ones that got us these wins? You think it was your passing, or my kicking? Y'all think that?

GEE
A lot of us contributed--

DEREK
Yeah, right...

Derek storms off.

EXT. FARMER FRAN'S PRODUCE STAND - DAY - EST.

The ancient wooden shelves are laden with fall fruits and vegetables (pumpkins, gourds, apples). Bobby is standing in front with Farmer Fran and Coach. He's wearing two oversized buttons which read "I LOVE FARMER FRAN!" and "HI, I'M THE WATERBOY". Bobby looks uncomfortable and nervous.

COACH
(directly to camera)
Hello, I'm Coach Keith Klein...

BOBBY
...and I'm Bobby Boucher. You may know me as a football player, but I'm also a savvy shopper. That's why I buy all my fruits and vegetables at Farmer Fran's Produce Stand.

CONTINUED:

FARMER FRAN
Iffy yo low gee bargone, yo canny go wone wi Farmy Fan!

CUT TO close-up of a sincere Fran from another angle.

FARMER FRAN
...ah garrronnnnteeee it.

A beat, then...

DIRECTOR (O.C.)
Cut!

CUT TO REVEAL a commercial is being shot at the stand. Bobby walks off the set over to where Vicki is standing, next to banners reading, "BEAT U OF L" and "GO WATERBOY."

VICKI
Thanks so much for doing this: you're the two most popular guys in Jackson's Bayou. Uncle Fran really appreciates it.

BOBBY
Well, it's my pleasure to assist the uncle of someone as wonderful as yours truly - I mean, you, yourself.. truly, that way, you are...

Farmer Fran comes over with two TOURISTS.

FARMER FRAN
Eeyiz, aw veyone soostah. Haba aliyo peejar, eh?

Farmer Fran places a tourist on either side of Bobby. The Tourists give Farmer Fran their camera, and he hands them a football and a water bottle as props. Farmer Fran prepares to take a picture.

FARMER FRAN
Say Yee!

Farmer Fran snaps the picture. The Tourists shake Bobby's hand, give Farmer Fran two dollars and leave. Farmer Fran whispers conspiratorially in Bobby's ear.

FARMER FRAN
Iffy yigeh tentos uckies yayday, Iganny retryin damunf! Eh-eh-eh-eh-eh--OOOOYAH!

CONTINUED:

What Farmer Fran sees is a bus pulling up. He rubs his hands together, like he always does when he smells money, and shuffles over to greet the bus passengers.

The bus door opens, revealing Greg, the mean lineman who tormented Bobby back at the University of Louisana. He descends the steps to where Farmer Fran is waiting, ready to shake hands.

FARMER FRAN
Farmy Fan, pezza dameechu!

With a sneer, Greg pushes Fran aside.

GREG
We must be in Retardville, USA.

The rest of the team descends from the bus behind him, and begin sauntering around the stand. These huge athletes dwarf the other customers and workers there. They play catch with pumpkins, whip tomatoes against the wall, steal radishes and generally act bad. Even the Watergirls are there, laughing at every mean thing the team does.

The biggest player, Tito, picks up Bobby's mower and drops it, destroying it.

Bobby, hiding behind a stack of crates, sees this and cringes.

GREG
Where's the Waterboy!?! I want to see the Waterboy!

Bobby steps out from behind the crates. A dozen players fall in behind Greg. It's high noon.

WATERGIRL
Kick his water-lovin' ass, Greg!

Bobby and the team walk towards each other. Finally, they stand nose to nose.

GREG
You gonna tackle all of us, you dumbass?

BOBBY
I... I... I...

Greg grabs Bobby by his shirt.

CONTINUED:

GREG
Come on, you freak...

Before Bobby can react, a knife suddenly appears at Greg's throat. It's Vicki.

VICKI
If you even exhale, I'll saw your head off.

A tense standoff, then...

RED
Whoa, Nelly!

Red has gotten off the bus.

RED
What have we got here? Surely whatever it is can be solved without resorting to the use of cutlery.

VICKI
Your team trashed the stand and threatened Bobby.

FARMER FRAN
Dizeana rye! Yostan pie poppy--

RED
One second, sir.
(to Greg)
Greg, did you trash the stand and threaten Bobby?

GREG
(smiling)
Yes, Coach.

RED
Well, that's not how ambassadors for University of Louisiana football are s'posed to act. Y'all get back on the bus!

They start getting back on the bus. Red whips out a pile of tickets and hands a bunch to Farmer Fran.

RED
I hope these Citrus Bowl tickets will in some way make up for the
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

RED (cont'd)
damages, along with my sincerest apologies...

Red walks over to Vicki and tips his hat.

RED
And my apologies to you too, Miss, for bringing a cloud to your sunny day. I could never forgive myself if I...

Red trails off as he sees Coach. He walks over to him.

RED
Klein! Good to see you, pardner. I been meanin' to call you; we should go out and get some supper or something one of these--

COACH
Don't give me that shit, Red. You and I both know the score.

Red stares at Coach for a long beat, then starts laughing.

RED
Whoa! You get that tough-guy talk out of the same book where you get your plays?

Coach is ashamed.

Red finally walks over to Bobby.

RED
And here's the famous waterboy. Hey, I got something for you...
(handing Bobby an envelope)
This here's a letter from the NCAA. I took the liberty of informing them about your lack of a high school diploma. Needless to say, they were very interested...

Coach looks at Bobby, stunned. Bobby looks confused.

Red walks over to the bus and up its stair as he talks.

RED
They want you to take some kind of "high school equivalency" test tomorrow. You fail, no more
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RED (cont'd)
football. In fact, no more college, neither. Good luck.

The door closes and the bus pulls away.

INT. COACH'S OFFICE - DAY

Coach has the letter out on the desk in front of him, and is talking on the phone. Bobby is nervously pacing nearby.

COACH
(on phone)
I understand, Mr. Donaldson, but I just don't see why Bobby can't have a little more time to prepare... Well, thanks for your time, Mr. Donaldson. Goodbye.

Coach hangs up, and goes to a file cabinet.

COACH
(looking through files)
I coulda sworn you gave me a high-school diploma, Bobby...

BOBBY
No, I was, uh... home-schooled.

Coach pulls a piece of paper out.

COACH
Here it is. Now I remember - your friend Vicki brought it over...

The diploma is a not-to-good fake, signed by "Principal Vicki".

BOBBY
Oh, boy, that's not real. She musta been trying to help me out.

COACH
Well, this letter from the NCAA is real. You have to take this exam tomorrow morning, and if you don't pass, you will be expelled from the university.

BOBBY
So I... I'm...

CONTINUED:

COACH
Screwed. The whole team's screwed. Dammit!

Coach angrily throws a paperweight which smashes against the wall.

Dr. Gilkey emerges from the closet and looks at Coach disapprovingly.

COACH (cont'd)
I'm cool, I'm cool.

Dr. Gilkey goes back into the closet.

COACH
Red bullied the NCAA, just like he bullied you... just like he bullied me, twenty years ago, when we were both assistants at the University of Louisiana. You see, our boss, Coach Cavanaugh, delegated a lot of responsibility to Red and me. Red ran the practices, and I came up with the plays...

FLASHBACK-Y DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COACH'S APARTMENT (1978) - NIGHT

Young Coach (with big afro) is in his funky Seventies apartment (Barry White is playing). He's writing a play in his green notebook, smiling.

COACH V.O.
Man I was good. We'd run those plays, and the opposition wouldn't know what hit 'em. When Cavanaugh retired, he was allowed to pick his own successor. Me and Red knew it was going to be one of us. Red came to see me the night before our interviews...

There's a knock at the door, and Young Coach gets up to get it. Young Coach opens the door; it's Young Red (also with big afro).

COACH
Hey, Red. Come by to wish me luck?

(CONTINUED)

RED
Not exactly, Klein. Your ol' pal Red needs a little favor.

COACH
Sure. What's up?

RED
I need to borrow that green notebook that you write all your plays in.

COACH
I'm kind of using it.

RED
Well, I need to use it, too, sos I can show Cavanaugh that I can come up with good plays.

Young Coach unconsciously puts his hand on the green notebook, which is sitting on his desk.

COACH
But... you didn't come up with them. They're my plays. I need them.

RED
No you don't, Klein. Let's face it: you got a good head for football, but you're no leader...

Young Coach's head is spinning. Young Red moves conspiratorially close.

RED
If I get this job, you stay on as my top assistant. Hell, I'll give you a big raise! But, if I don't get this job, whoever they hire is gonna shitcan the both of us. So come on, Klein, gimme that notebook... Fork it over... You heard me, give it up... Let's not have this turn physical, you don't want that...

In a trance-like state, Young Coach lets Red slide the notebook from under his hand.

RED
Thanks, Klein. You're a good egg.

CONTINUED:

Young Red leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. CAVANAUGH'S OFFICE - DAY

Young Red and Young Coach are sitting opposite Cavanaugh's big desk.

COACH V.O.
I guess you can figure out the rest of the story...

BOBBY V.O.
Uh, no, not really.

COACH V.O.
Oh. Well, I didn't get the job...

CAVANAUGH
Sorry, Klein. I just think Red has the whole skills package. I'm confident he'll do a great job.

Cavanaugh stands and shakes Young Red's hand as Young Coach looks on.

RED
Oh, I will. I've got some big plans for the team. Some really big plans...

Red starts laughing. Cavanaugh joins in. Coach is wide-eyed; this is a nightmare come to life.

COACH V.O.
Red fired me the next day. Once he had the notebook, he didn't need me anymore. He had made me his bitch. And I didn't take that too well...

INT. COACH'S APARTMENT (1978) - DAY

Coach is on the phone, crying.

COACH
I didn't get it... I can't believe it either!... I know!... I just-- I'm numb...

PAN DOWN the phone wire to reveal the phone cord isn't connected to anything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAN FURTHER DOWN to reveal Young Coach is wearing women's shoes.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

INT. COACH'S OFFICE - DAY

Coach has finished his story.

BOBBY
That's a sad story, Coach. But why don't you just watch Red's plays on the TV and write them down?

COACH
That's not right. They're Red's plays now. Everybody would say I'm copying him.

BOBBY
I bet you could write new plays just as good as the ones in that green notebook.

COACH
I tried, I can't. I have some kind of mental block or something. I'm in bad shape. I mean, I have a shrink with bad breath watching me all the time!

CUT TO:

INT. CLOSET - DAY

Dr. Gilkey, furiously scribbling notes, looks up, hurt.

INT. COACH'S OFFICE - DAY

Coach hangs his head.

COACH
Bobby, I get our plays out of a book, a book for idiots like me.

BOBBY
Don't feel bad, Coach. That Red Beaulieu is a tricky rascal.

CONTINUED:

COACH
He didn't trick me, Bobby. I knew what he was going to do. I just... didn't fight back...

Coach sighs sadly. Then Bobby stands up.

BOBBY
But you're gonna fight back New Year's Day, and I'm gonna be right there with you fightin'! I'm very excited and happy to be takin' this test! Only dummys are afraid of tests! I gotta go study!

Bobby runs out of the room.

After a beat, Dr. Gilkey comes out of the closet.

DR. GILKEY
Keith, we have to talk...

INT. MAMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Bobby is sitting at the kitchen table, studying intently.

WIDEN TO REVEAL Mama sitting in a chair ten feet away, staring at him. After a beat...

MAMA
Let Mama rub your neck.

BOBBY
That's okay, Mama. I got to study.

MAMA
"Study." He never used to study...

Another beat.

MAMA
It's this foosball. That's the cause of all this mood swings and studying.

BOBBY
Mama, please. If I don't do good on this test tomorrow, they're gonna throw me out of school.

CONTINUED:

MAMA
Good! Then we'll be done with this nonsense once and for all.

For the first time, Bobby looks up.

BOBBY
Mama, I enjoy going to school.

MAMA
Don't seem to me like you enjoys it. Sitting there, all grouchy...

BOBBY
It's just there's a lot of pressure, Mama. I got school, football, waterboy duties...

MAMA
What about your Mama duties?!

Bobby softens.

BOBBY
I'm sorry, Mama. We haven't spent too much time together lately. But after I get back from Orlando, you and me can...

MAMA
Orlando?! You're goin' to Orlando?!

BOBBY
Uh, yes, that's where the Citrus Bowl is, Mama. Orlando.

Mama starts pacing around the room, ranting and raving.

MAMA
I forbid you to go to that evil Sodom!

BOBBY
But Mama...

MAMA
You're galavanting off to Orlando with your fancy foosball friends, while I sit here all day with nobody but Steve to keep me company...

CONTINUED:

Steve has his head in the toilet, drinking water.

BOBBY
...Mama, please...

MAMA
The chickens are comin' home to roost, Bobby Boucher! You'll reap the fruit of your selfish ways! You're gonna lose all your precious foosball games, and you are gonna fail that exam tomorrow-

BOBBY
SHUT YOUR MOUTH, MAMA!

Mama's so shocked she staggers backward.

BOBBY
I like school and I like football and I'm gonna keep doing both of them because they make me feel good, Mama! And by the way, alligators are ornery because of their abdullah oregenata!

Bobby grabs his books and runs out the door.

EXT. MAMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Bobby plops down on the porch, upset. After a beat, he hears a noise behind him.

BOBBY
I'm sorry, Mama, I just--

Bobby turns to see it's Steve the mule walking out the front door.

BOBBY
Oh, it's you. I got a lot to learn in one night, Steve. What am I gonna do?

VICKI
You're gonna study.

Vicki is standing in Vicki's front yard.

BOBBY
Vicki...

CONTINUED:

VICKI
I'm sorry about the diploma. Bobby. I was only trying to help.

BOBBY
I know. But you can't be cheatin' and stealin' all the time, even if it is to help somebody.

VICKI
I know. So if I promise not to cheat or steal or hurt anybody or their pets, will you let me help you?

Vicki smiles. Bobby smiles.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Vicki and Derek are both paging through books. Bobby is taking notes on a yellow pad. The mess of papers and coffee cups shows they've been there for a while.

VICKI
How about velocity?

DEREK
Velocity is the rate at which acceleration changes.

Bobby looks up from his pad, with a quizzical look.

BOBBY
Actually, I think, acceleration is the rate at which velocity changes.

DEREK
Oh, yeah, yeah. I'm always switching words around. Good catch.

Vicki closes her book.

VICKI
I think you're ready, Bobby.

BOBBY
You sure? Is there anything else I missed by not going to high school?

CONTINUED:

VICKI
The prom, smoking a joint before homeroom...

DEREK
...And smoking a joint outside the cafeteria....

VICKI
...And during study hall...

DEREK
...And right after school...

Bobby puts down his pad.

BOBBY
I mean things of an academic nature. I know alot about physics and history and math, but what about literature? I don't know much about literature!

GEE
I do.

Gee is standing there holding a stack of books.

BOBBY
Gee...

GEE
C'mon, we got a lot of studying to do.

Bobby is touched. They get back to work.

FADE TO:

INT. EXAM ROOM - DAY

Bobby is standing nervously in the center of a large, mostly empty room. At one end, a small table has been set up, and three EXAMINERS are sitting behind it, including TONY DONALDSON (Bobcat Goldthwait).

DONALDSON
Thanks for coming on such short notice, Mr. Boucher. I'm Tony Donaldson, regional director of the NCAA. First off, I want you to know that we're required by our charter to follow up on complaints
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONALDSON (cont'd)
like Mr. Beaulieu's; it's nothing personal. That having been said... well, my kids love you, and... hell, I love you. You're an inspiration to those of us who weren't born handsome and charming and cool, and... I really hope this turns out okay.

BOBBY
I appreciate that, Mr. Donaldson.

Donaldson hands Bobby a sheaf of papers.

DONALDSON
The Louisiana High School Equivalency Examination consists of 300 multiple choice questions. You have three hours. Good luck.

Bobby salutes Donaldson, sits down at a little desk and gets to work.

CUT TO:

EXAM MONTAGE

1. Bobby looks at the first question. It's about the chemical composition of water. Bobby smiles.

2. Bobby looks out the window and sees Derek and Gee peeking in at him, giving thumbs up. Bobby sneakily gives thumbs up back.

3. Bobby gets a question about Ben Franklin. He ponders...

FLASHBACK-Y DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MAMA'S HOUSE (1974) - AFTERNOON

Young Bobby asks Mama a question.

YOUNG BOBBY
Mama, when did Ben Franklin invent electricity?

MAMA
That's nonsense. I invented electricity. Ben Franklin... IS THE DEVIL!

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

INT. EXAM ROOM - DAY

Bobby shakes his head and moves on.

4. Bobby fills in the last question. He hands the test to Donaldson.

DONALDSON
Thanks, Bobby. I'll be done marking it in a minute or so.

FADE TO:

EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - DAY

Bobby is walking triumphantly down the steps, trailed by Derek and Gee.

GEE
I can't believe you got a 97!

DEREK
I can't believe we're goin' to the Citrus Bowl!

Bobby sees an ambulance driving crazily across the campus quad. It pulls up right next to them, and Bobby sees that it's Vicki behind the wheel.

BOBBY
Hey, Vicki, I passed the test!

VICKI
Bobby, I have to tell you something. I just came from the hospital. Your mother collapsed this morning.

Bobby reacts.

FADE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Mama is unconscious in bed. Bobby is leaning over her, tears in his eyes.

BOBBY
Oh, Mama. What have I done? Your whole life, you do and you do for me, and this is how I repay you. I'm so sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A shadow falls over Bobby. It's Coach.

COACH
How's she doing?

Bobby turns to face Coach, away from Mama.

BOBBY
Doctors say they can't figure out what's wrong with her.

Bobby and Coach stand silently for a sad beat.

COACH
Well won't it be nice when she wakes up to see the Citrus Bowl trophy sitting on her night stand?

BOBBY
Coach, I can't play in the Citrus Bowl with Mama like this.

Coach is crushed.

In the background, Mama picks up her head, smiling as she listens eagerly.

BOBBY
It's alright. I did what I set out to do: prove to everyone that I'm not a dummy. I don't need football no more.

COACH
But we need you! What about your teammates? What about your fans? What about me?

BOBBY
Look at this lady, Coach...

Bobby turns and gestures to Mama, almost catching her before she pretends to be unconscious again.

BOBBY
She's my whole world. How important is a football game compared to her?

COACH
I'm sorry. You're right, Bobby. I'll say a prayer for her.

CONTINUED:

Coach kneels down next to the bed, closes his eyes tight and whispers a sincere prayer. We can hear him, but Bobby can't.

COACH
Please get well soon, Mrs. Boucher, so that your son will stop being so pig-headed and play in the goddamn Citrus Bowl next week, so he can lead us to a great victory, a victory which would make up for the string of disappointments and humiliations that has been my life...

Mama opens one eye, then quickly shuts it.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

The Generals are lugging their gear onto a huge bus which has "CITRUS BOWL OR BUST" painted on the side.

Vicki is handing out bell jars of some water concoction to the players as they board the bus.

VICKI
Bobby wanted y'all to have this special water... He's sorry he can't make it... Remember, sip not gulp...

Coach is last in line to board the bus. He stops to talk to Vicki.

COACH
Anything new over at the hospital?

VICKI
Nope. Still unconscious; the doctors are clueless. Bobby thinks she has a broken heart because he talked back to her.

COACH
That's so sad.

VICKI
Yeah. Anyway, here's his waterboy notes.

Vicki gives Coach a sheaf of about a hundred pages.

CONTINUED:

VICKI
He says you can skip the section on "Water and Sunstroke", since it's a night game. But when in doubt, just remember the waterboy's golden rule--

COACH
"Keep it clean and keep it cold?"

VICKI
Bingo.

The bus roars to life.

COACH
This is such a shame. If Bobby only knew how much he meant to this team, to this whole town...

VICKI
Yeah...

COACH
Well I better get going. Tell him I said hi, and... happy new year.

VICKI
Good luck with the game.

The door closes, and the bus pulls away.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Bobby is walking down the hallway with a bug zapper under his arm. He turns and goes into Mama's room.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Bobby has transformed the antiseptic room into an exact replica of Mama's house, down to the last detail. He puts the bug zapper on a side table and plugs it in.

BOBBY
How's that?

Steve the mule, standing next to Mama's bed, smiles.

Bobby checks on Mama, then sits down, grabs a remote control, and clicks on the TV.

ON TV

CONTINUED:

is "Dick Clark's New Years Rockin' Eve".

CUT TO:

EXT. JACKSON'S BAYOU - DAY

Quick shots of the following:

1. Vicki knocking on a battered door; Farmer Fran answering.

2. Vicki and Farmer Fran knocking on a nice door; the Professor answering.

3. Vicki and Farmer Fran knocking on a door draped in black bunting, with a picture of a dog taped on it, above which is written, "In Loving Memory". The Redneck who made fun of Bobby answers; he eyes Vicki suspiciously.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Now Bobby's watching "ESPN SportsCenter", with Dan Patrick.

DAN PATRICK (ON TV)
...the most intriguing of all tomorrow's bowl games is certainly the Citrus Bowl, where the only thing standing between Red Beaulieu's Louisiana Tigers and a national championship is tiny South Central Louisiana State - which is minus their star linebacker, Bobby Boucher...

Bobby turns off the TV.

CUT TO:

EXT. JACKSON'S BAYOU - DAY

Quick shots of the following:

1. Vicki and Farmer Fran knocking on a door; Deputy Loughran and Deputy Jack answer (neither are wearing shirts).

2. Vicki and Farmer Fran knocking on another door; Geraldo Rivera answers.

3. Vicki and Farmer Fran knocking on a tent flap; Paco pokes his head out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PACO
Who dat?

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Bobby is sitting on the couch.

BOBBY
Well, Steve, everything's back to normal: you, me and Mama spending New Year's Eve together...

Silence, then a faint noise. It's a rhythmic noise, getting louder, and finally Bobby can make out what it is.

MANY VOICES
Waterboy... Waterboy... Waterboy...

A weird, flickering light comes through the window. As the chant becomes ever louder, Bobby pulls aside the drapes and looks out.

In the parking lot below, Bobby sees Vicki, Farmer Fran and behind them, a sea of familiar faces: the Redneck, Deputy Loughran and Deputy Jack, the Professor, Geraldo Rivera, Walter and Paco and a bunch of townspeople, holding torches and chanting...

MANY VOICES
Waterboy...Waterboy...Waterboy...

In bed, Mama opens one eye.

When the chanters see Bobby, the chant breaks up amid hoots and applause. Vicki steps forward.

VICKI
My Uncle Fran Vallencourt, MVP of the 1938 S.C.L.S.U Generals, has something he wants to say, on behalf of all of us.

Farmer Fran pulls a piece of paper out of his pocket and slowly unfolds it. He puts his reading glasses on, and clears his throat. Then...

FARMER FRAN
Abby hayo peelojay eye ooh, wewuhwo drinf yuwan--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VICKI
Let me say it, Uncle Fran. Bobby, the chance to play in the Citrus Bowl means so much to the school, to the whole town and, most of all, to you. We know that if your Mama could talk, she'd tell you to go down to Florida and make her proud.

Bobby takes a breath.

BOBBY
You know something?
(a beat)
That's not true at all. Mama would tell me to stay here with her. Y'all don't know my Mama very well.

Vicki shrugs. She gave it a shot.

BOBBY
I'm very, very sorry for disappointing all of you. Now would you please keep it down so Mama can get her rest.

Bobby slowly backs up and closes the drapes. The torchlight illuminating the room slowly fades away as the disappointed chanters go home.

MAMA
Bobby, come here.

Bobby, startled, sees Mama sitting up in bed. He runs over to her.

BOBBY
Oh, Mama, you're okay! I'm so sorry, I was so bad, you were right about everything, I been a real knucklehead and I just wanna say--

MAMA
Hold that thought.
(to Steve)
Steve, bring me my scrapbook.

Steve goes into a closet and emerges with some sort of scrapbook in his mouth. He brings it over to Mama, and Mama gives it to Bobby.

CONTINUED:

MAMA
You should've seen this a long time ago, baby. Open it.

Bobby does. There's a picture of a much younger Mama with a strapping young man.

BOBBY
My word... is that my...

MAMA
No, that's Rudy Marcoux, a guy I dated before I met your father. You could iron a shirt on his stomach. But that was lust, not love. Turn the page.

Bobby does. There's another picture, of a short, crazy-eyed, uneven-nostrilled cajun.

MAMA
That's your Daddy. So handsome. Read on...

Bobby turns the page. There's another picture of Mama and Bobby's dad, only now Mama's pregnant. There's an old letter glued to the facing page. Bobby reads it.

BOBBY
"Dear Helen..."
(to Mama)
Who's Helen?

MAMA
That's my first name, Bobby.

BOBBY
Oh...
(resumes reading)
"Dear Helen, I have arrived safe and sound here in Orlando. It is even more beautiful than in the picture books. And so many people! I'm sure I'll have no problem finding work, so you can expect my next letter to contain lots of money! Your loving husband, Robert." That's nice.

Bobby flips the page. There's another yellowed letter.

CONTINUED:

BOBBY
(reading)
"Dear Helen, I found a job as a lemonade vendor in a new amusement park called "The Walt Disney World". Sorry no money yet, but Orlando is an expensive city - expensive but fun! Hope all is well at home, Robert."

Bobby flips the page. Another letter.

BOBBY
(reading)
"To whom it may concern: this will be my last letter. We have grown apart over these last six months, so much so that I think it would be best if we ended our relationship. Ciao, Roberto."

MAMA
He changed his name to Roberto. I guess he thought it was more... exotic.

BOBBY
Mama, are you tellin' me--

MAMA
--that your daddy wasn't in no Peace Corps. He abandoned us, baby, to work at the Disney World.

Bobby's eyes widen with understanding.

BOBBY
That's why you never wanted me to leave the house. You was worried I wouldn't come back neither.

MAMA
That's not an unfair statement.

BOBBY
Mama, you shouldn't be dredgin' up these painful memories in your condition...

MAMA
Mama's as healthy as an ox - and as dumb as one, too. I was so scared that you'd abandon me that
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAMA (cont'd)
I made you abandon all those people who depend on you. I hid you away from the world, Bobby Boucher, but I can't hog you to myself no more, cause everyone has seen how wonderful you are...

BOBBY
Oh, Mama...

Bobby hugs Mama. Then she grabs him by the shoulders and looks him in the eye.

MAMA
Bobby, go play foosball with your friends.

EXT. SWAMP - EARLY MORNING

Bobby is standing on the edge of a big swamp, next to Mama and Vicki (on her motorcycle). Docked nearby is one of those fan-powered swamp boats.

BOBBY
We ready to go now?

Farmer Fran pops his head up from underneath the control panel. He's greasy, like he's been fixing something.

FARMER FRAN
Rayall ebbidee!

Bobby turns back to Vicki and Mama.

BOBBY
I wish there was room on the boat for all four of us.

Vicki hands Mama a motorcycle helmet.

VICKI
Don't worry. We'll get there.

CUT TO:

EXT. SWAMP - MORNING

LONG SHOT of Bobby and Farmer Fran on the boat, pulling away from the dock and speeding off into the swamp.

BOBBY
Does this thing really do 100 mph?

CONTINUED:

FARMER FRAN
Ista fastmatavur.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

Coach walks through a dark tunnel and emerges... inside the Citrus Bowl. His team is doing jumping jacks on the field, getting ready for tonight's game.

EXT. GULF OF MEXICO - DAY

Farmer Fran is piloting the loud, smoke-spewing fan boat at breakneck speed. He passes a cigarette speed boat.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Vicki and Mama are racing down the highway on Vicki's motorcycle.

MAMA
(shouting over engine)
So if one squad can get the ball past the "goal line", then they score a point?

VICKI
No, then they score six points - seven if they can kick the ball through the goal posts, or eight if they can complete a pass play.

MAMA
Lord, you gotta be another Albert Weinstein to play this game!

VIDEOTAPE/GRAPHICS PACKAGE

Music: Dramatic Football Score

Shots of Red (IN SLOW MOTION) over the past thirty years.

FRANK GIFFORD V.O.
On one side of the field: a coaching legend, in search of his fifth national championship,...

Shots of huge Louisiana players making tackles, scoring touchdowns, etc.

FRANK GIFFORD V.O.
...fielding perhaps the most talented team he has ever had. On the other side of the field,...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pan in on Coach Klein's high school yearbook picture.

FRANK GIFFORD V.O.
...a neophyte, who had a career record of 3 and 44 - until this year, when something very special happened...

SLOW MOTION footage of Bobby making a tackle.

FRANK GIFFORD V.O.
...But can the Generals win without Bobby Boucher?

A question mark is superimposed over the footage of Bobby.

Fade to a Cougar helmet and a Generals helmet crashing into each other. Out of the destruction comes the graphic: "THE CITRUS BOWL".

CUT TO:

INT. BROADCAST BOOTH

FRANK GIFFORD, AL MICHAELS and DAN DIERDORF of ABC Sports are calling the game.

FRANK GIFFORD
Welcome to ABC's coverage of the Citrus Bowl. I'm Frank Gifford, along with Al Michaels and Dan Dierdorf, and Dan, there is no love lost between these two Louisiana teams.

DAN DIERDORF
Or these two coaches, who were both assistants at the University of Louisiana under Don Cavanaugh.

AL MICHAELS
But their coaching styles couldn't be more different. Red has always been an imaginative play caller, but Klein has been as dull as dishwater this year.

FRANK GIFFORD
Of course, none of that mattered with Bobby Boucher on the field. Boucher, of course, resigned as both linebacker and waterboy of the South Central Louisiana State
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK GIFFORD (cont'd)
Generals a week ago, due to a family crisis.

DAN DIERDORF
And nobody's more upset about that than Boucher's fans...

CUT TO:

EXT. CITRUS BOWL

WE PAN past the sad "Waterheads" in the stands.

DAN DIERDORF (VO)
...who are clearly lost without their hero...

INT. LOCKER ROOM

Coach is giving the team a pep talk.

COACH
...Millions and millions of people will be watching on TV!! You can show everyone who was ever mean to you how far you have come: every kid who ever knocked you over, called you "sissy-boy" or "Candy-ass Klein", made you eat dirt and rocks and pennies and...

Coach trails off. The blank stares he's getting from his team let him know that he's gotten too personal.

COACH
Alright, look: I'm proud of you guys, win or lose. But I'll be much prouder if you win. So let's do it!

The team hoots and hollers and runs out of the locker room. Coach is alone.

COACH (cont'd)
We're all gonna die.

Coach walks dejectedly out of the locker room. Dr. Gilkey offers coach two large pink pills. Coach looks at them for a second, then shakes his head "no" and walks off.

Dr. Gilkey shrugs and takes the pills himself.

EXT. CITRUS BOWL STANDS

Pro coaches JIMMY JOHNSON and BILL PARCELLS are seated together in the stands.

JIMMY JOHNSON
Red's got a couple of solid early rounders out there.

BILL PARCELLS
I know, but I really wanted to scout that Waterboy. He reminds me of LT.

A couple of rows away, Walter and Paco are preparing for kickoff.

PACO
This is the best! I've never been so excited!

WALTER
What about when you discovered how to jerk off?

PACO
Alright, the second-most excited.

EXT. CITRUS BOWL

AL MICHAELS
Okay, here's the opening kick. And it's a beauty.

Derek kicks off to the Cougars. The kick reaches the back of the endzone, but the returner takes it out anyway.

AL MICHAELS (CONT'D)
He's bringing it out from ten yards deep, showing little respect for the Boucher-less Generals...

The returner breaks through all the tacklers and is in the clear at the fifty yard line.

FRANK GIFFORD
And with good reason. He's going 110 yards. Untouched!

The returner sprints into the endzone and is mobbed by his teamates. Red smiles.

Coach Klein grimaces.

EXT. GULF OF MEXICO

The light is waning. The fan boat flies along.

Farmer Fran points to some lights in the distance.

BOBBY
Florida...

EXT. CITRUS BOWL

Another Cougar player is running into the endzone. He does an electric dance, and is mobbed by his teamates.

AL MICHAELS
Red Beaulieu's Cougars are certainly making this look easy.

The scoreboard shows 14-0. Still in the first quarter.

EXT. DOCK

The fan boat pulls up, and Bobby ties it up. The Citrus Bowl is far in the distance.

BOBBY
That looks pretty far away. How'm I gonna get there?

FARMER FRAN
Gedaladis!

Farmer Fran pulls a tarp off of something in the back of the boat. It's Bobby's riding mower, repaired, cleaned and repainted, with a fiery racing stripe down the side.

BOBBY
What did you do to my lawn mower, Farmer Fran?

CUT TO:

EXT. FLORIDA STREETS - EVENING

Bobby is flying along on his mower at 40 miles per hour.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FLORIDA STREETS

Bobby is weaving in and out of traffic, making good time.

EXT. CITRUS BOWL

The scoreboard reads 24-0. There are two minutes left in the first half.

DAN DIERDORF
If they go in here, even I'm gonna switch my monitor to the Rose Bowl.

Coach Klein hears something in the distance. He listens. He listens harder. It sounds like Bobby's lawnmower.

COACH
Time out!

Coach Klein runs toward the gate at the open endzone. The sound gets louder. The lawnmower is getting closer.

AL MICHAELS
Uh-oh. This could be interesting folks. We all know about Coach Klein's-- shall we say, unstable past. And maybe the intense media spotlight is finally getting to him. We'll sort it out and check back with you after this.

They go to commercial. As Coach runs down the middle of the field toward the gate, the sound gets even louder. People in the stands are looking at each other, 'What's going on?'

Coach rips open the gate just as Bobby mows on through.

BOBBY
Where's the lockeroom!?

The coach points to the other end.

The crowd goes crazy.

Bobby rides his mower down the middle of the field, disrupting both huddles, and right into the other tunnel and into the lockeroom. The referee comes over to coach.

REFEREE JONES
We can't wait for him. Your time out's over.

COACH
How many do I have left.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REFEREE JONES
Two.

Coach makes the time out signal.

COACH
Well, time out again.

EXT. SIDELINE

Red now looks a little worried. He goes up to his quarterback.

RED
All right, don't worry. We knew he'd show up. Let's just do like planned.

The quarterback nods and runs out on the field.

EXT. CITRUS BOWL

The whole crowd is chanting. "WATERBOY, WATERBOY". Bobby runs out of the tunnel all dressed and the crowd really erupts.

A particularly pathetic-looking group of Waterboy fans are anxiously awaiting their hero.

LOSER
(pointing)
Hey! There he is!

Bobby runs over to Coach. The whole team pats him on the back and welcomes him.

BOBBY
I don't know how well I'm gonna do, Coach. I'm not really mad at anyone anymore.

COACH
You don't need to be; you have all the tools. Just try to play some smart football.

BOBBY
I will, Coach.

COACH
And if you really need motivation: well, do it for every kid who ever
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COACH (cont'd)
got picked on - and any adult who ever got picked on, too...

EXT. CITRUS BOWL

Bobby runs onto the field. The Generals and the Cougars line up. The Cougar quarterback runs the cadence and the center snaps the ball. It's a running play, away from Bobby. Bobby starts to pursue.

Only it's a REVERSE. Bobby's not fooled this time. He heads for the real ball carrier and crushes him into the turf for a 12 yard loss.

Coach hugs the guy holding the first down marker.

Red holds his head. He motions to the huge Tito. A 300 pound lineman type.

RED
Get in there. Let's see that waterboy stop you, heh-heh...

Tito runs in and plays fullback.

The ball is snapped, and the quarterback hands off to Tito, who runs right at Bobby. Bobby sidesteps him, spins him around and gives him "the back breaker"

BOBBY
That's the way Captain Insano does it.

The Waterheads go nuts.

INT. ANNOUNCERS BOOTH

AL MICHAELS
Generals ball. Unfortunately, there's only three seconds left. They can try a Hail Mary.

DAN DIERDORF
Or a sixty yard field goal.

AL MICHAELS
That looks like what they're gonna do.

Derek trots out onto the field. He assumes his position, then looks into the TV camera and mouths...

DEREK (cont'd)
This one's for you, Mama.

CONTINUED:

The ball is snapped and the holder puts it down.

DEREK'S POV

The ball morphs into DEREK'S GIRLFRIEND's head.

DEREK'S GIRLFRIEND
You call that a birthday present? For your girlfriend? You get your ass back to the mall and buy me something nice...

Derek runs up and kicks the head, which goes flying.

REGULAR POV

The ball splits the uprights.

On the sidelines, lightbulbs flash, cameras whir, and we hear many voices murmuring.

MANY VOICES
Derek Wallace... Who's Derek Wallace?... You see that kick?...

In the stands, Bill Parcells is writing something down.

BILL PARCELLS
What was that kid's name? Wallace?

JIMMY JOHNSON
Forget it, Bill. He's mine.

As Derek and Bobby celebrate, WE PAN UP to the scoreboard. The Cougars are still leading, 24 to 3.

EXT. SIDELINE

Referee fires off the gun. The teams head for the locker room.

EXT. STANDS

Paco is on his feet, applauding wildly.

PACO
Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes!

INT. LOCKER ROOM

The offense is huddling around Coach.

CONTINUED:

COACH
Alright, we need to get some offense going. Um... Uh...

Bobby inserts himself into the huddle.

BOBBY
Excuse me, Coach, but I thought you might need this.

Bobby hands Coach a brand-new blue notebook and a pen.

BOBBY (cont'd)
You know, to jot down plays, etc.

COACH
Bobby, I don't--

BOBBY
Just jot down one that's floatin' around your head. There's a good one in there, I bet, deep, deep down...

Coach looks around the room. Everyone's looking at him.

He writes down one "X" and one "O".

He looks up, panicked. Everyone's still looking at him.

He draws an arrow from the "O" to a spot right behind the "X".

BOBBY (cont'd)
So "X" is the quarterback?

COACH
Uh... no. "X" is the running back. "O" is the quarterback. After the quarterback hands off to the running back, he runs behind him and takes the ball back.

Coach looks up again. The team looks like it approves. Coach smiles.

EXT. CITRUS BOWL

Lynn Swann is interviewing Vicki, who is trying to set up Bobby's water table.

Mama is standing behind the table. Throughout the interview, she keeps smiling at the camera, waving, etc.

CONTINUED:

LYNN SWANN
I'm with Vicki Vallencourt. Vicki, you're taking over the water duties for Bobby since this is such a big game.

VICKI
I'm not taking over. I'm just tryin' not to screw things up too bad.

Behind Vicki, Mama starts doing a crazy dance for the camera.

LYNN SWANN
Well better luck to you in the second half. Any predictions for the rest of the game?

VICKI
Generals will win, 27 - 24.

LYNN SWANN
Wow. And how'd you come up with that guess, Vicki?

VICKI
It's not a guess, Lynn. That's what the score's gonna be.

LYNN SWANN
Okay, easy...

INT. LOCKER ROOM

The coach now has X's and O's everywhere. He draws one final arrow into the endzone and puts a huge circle on it.

COACH
Alright, let's get out there and do it!

The team runs out of the lockeroom.

EXT. SIDELINE

The Generals receive the opening kickoff. Poot runs it back and gets hammered at the twenty. The offense runs out onto the field. Bobby stands next to Coach.

COACH
Bobby, get out there.

CONTINUED:

BOBBY
But I...

COACH
No time to argue. We have to make up twenty one points and we only scored 26 all season.

Bobby runs out onto the field and joins the huddle. The Coach looks surprisingly at ease.

INT. BROADCAST BOOTH

FRANK GIFFORD V.O.
Well, well... Keith Klein does have a few tricks up his sleeve after all: Bobby Boucher is gonna play offense.

EXT. CITRUS BOWL

Bobby makes eye contact with Greg in the Cougar's huddle. Greg smiles, and gives Bobby the finger-across-the-throat, "you're dead" hand gesture.

Bobby lines up at tailback. Gee sets the team. The ball is snapped, and Gee hands off to Bobby. Then Gee runs behind Bobby, and Bobby flips it back to him. Gee takes off down the line.

Greg is the only guy who has a shot at Gee, but Bobby lays a vicious hit on him. Gee scrambles for a huge gain.

On the sidelines, the Cheerleaders cheer.

In the stands, the Waterheads go nuts.

On the field, Bobby smiles: he likes playing offense.

Gee runs over to the sideline to get the next play.

INT. BROADCAST BOOTH

DAN DIERDORF
Klein's clever integration Bobby Boucher into his offense was an excellent halftime adjustment. He may have outfoxed the great Red Beaulieu.

EXT. CITRUS BOWL

Red bellows out to his team.

CONTINUED:

RED
Watch the waterboy. The rest of them are nothing. You hear?!

On the field, a play unfolds: Gee fakes a hand-off to Bobby, drawing the whole Cougar defense with him. Gee fades back in the pocket and lofts a perfect pass to the wide open Casey. TOUCHDOWN! Scoreboard 24-10.

MUSIC UP

SECOND HALF MONTAGE

1. Coach gets an idea and scribbles it into the blue notebook.

2. Bobby lines up on defense. The Cougars shift a tight end and fullback over to block him. Bobby leaves his position and lines up over the center. When the ball is snapped, he streks through untouched and sacks the quarterback.

3. On the Cougars' sideline, Red is frantically flipping through the green notebook, looking for a play.

4. Bobby lines up over center again. Two running backs shift tight to the line in anticipation of Bobby's rush. When the ball is snapped, the quarterback hurredly throws the ball. But Bobby, didn't rush. He dropped back into coverage. He easily intercepts the ball.

5. On the sideline, Red angrily throws the green notebook. He grabs a cup of water and takes a sip, then spits it out.

RED
Where's them damn watergirls?

A group of gorgeous Watergirls in skimpy costumes are combing each others hair.

WATERGIRL
Something wrong, Coach?

RED
Yeah, this water tastes like shit!

WATERGIRL
Well, I'm sorry. We're not perfect, you know.

6. Bobby in the huddle with offense.

CONTINUED:

BOBBY
(stuttering alot)
Remember what Coach said, on this play, there's a chance the defense, they're gonna try to, mind you, this is only a possibility--

GEE
Spit it out! We got five seconds!

BOBBY
They gonna blitz.

7. Vicki is checking the pH level of the water.

VICKI
Slightly acidic...

Mama drops in a few de-acidifying tablets.

8. Coach is now scribbling madly in the blue notebook, tearing out sheets and handing them to his assistants.

9. The Generals line up for a field goal. Bobby gets the snap and puts in down. Derek approaches the ball. At the last second, Bobby picks up the ball and tosses it to the end (Casey) who was coming around instead of blocking (like a reverse). The Cougars don't know what's going on as Poot runs easily into the endzone.

10. Farmer Fran takes off his shirt and waves it around. Several people move away from him.

11. The Scoreboard reads 24-17. Fourth Quarter.

12. The Generals kickoff and as Bobby goes to make a tackle, an offensive lineman blindsides him. Mama runs out on the field and tackles the lineman. Security guards pull her over to the sideline.

13. Bobby in the defensive huddle.

BOBBY
Okay, Coach has an idea...

The huddle breaks up, and Bobby lines up in his usual spot. At the last second, everyone shifts over. No one is left next to Bobby. Seven players line up on the other side of center. There's only three Cougars left to block them. The quarterback hikes the ball and is sacked by three guys. He fumbles and one of them pounces on the ball.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

14. In the stands, the Waterheads go nuts, especially the Jackson's Bayou contingent. Walter and Paco spill beer all over Jimmy Johnson and Bill Parcells.

15. Derek lines up for a field goal. The defensive team, doesn't rush. They are looking for the fake. Derek boots it through. The scoreboard reads 24-21. There's only twenty seconds left.

16. Many of the Cougar's are bent over, wheezing.

RED
What the hell's wrong with everybody?

LASKI
They're dehydrated, Coach.

Red looks over to see the Watergirls playing "Spin the Bottle" with some male cheerleaders and the COUGAR MASCOT.

17. Lynn Swann is deep in thought. An ASSISTANT notices this.

ASSISTANT
Penny for your thoughts, Lynn.

LYNN SWANN
Oh, it's just something this weird, angry girl said to me earlier. If the Generals can get the ball back and score a touchdown, she will have correctly predicted the final score...

PAN TO Vicki, twenty feet away, staring at Lynn, nodding and smiling. Lynn is scared.

MONTAGE ENDS

Derek is preparing for an onsides kick. He scans the formidable Cougar line and spots one guy who's just as huge as the others, but looks kind of scared.

DEREK
(to himself)
There's my bitch...

Derek kicks it right to the scared looking guy, who chokes and fumbles. Bobby recovers.

The Citrus Bowl fans, now completely won over by the Generals, roar their approval.

CONTINUED:

There's five seconds left on the clock.

Bobby doesn't get up.

FRANK GIFFORD V.O.
Uh-oh, Bobby Boucher is down...

A crowd of concerned teammates gather round.

VICKI V.O.
Excuse me... Watch out...

Vicki shoves her way past the players to Bobby. He looks very dazed and out of it. She cradles his head in her arms, and takes a small, silver flask of water out of her jacket.

VICKI
You said to save this for an emergency, Bobby, and I guess this is an emergency.

She puts the flask to his lips.

VICKI
Here it comes - the super-pure, mineral-rich Antarctic glacier water.

Bobby drinks a little. After a beat, he springs to his feet.

The crowd roars.

INT. BROADCAST BOOTH

AL MICHAELS
Do you believe in miracles!

CUT TO:

EXT. CITRUS BOWL SIDELINE

Bobby walks over to the sideline.

COACH
Bobby, I have an extra-crazy idea about this last play.

BOBBY
Uh, lay it on me, Coach.

COACH
The thing is, it's kind of...

Coach leans in close to tell Bobby.

BOBBY
Wow. I never done no passing before, Coach.

COACH
I know. It's the last thing they'll expect.

BOBBY
I just aim and throw, right?

COACH
Uh, yeah...

Bobby starts to run out onto the field; Vicki calls out.

VICKI
Hey, team!

She is standing next to a big bucket of water with many straws sticking out of it.

VICKI (cont'd)
Everybody take a quick sip. For luck.

The whole team crowds around the barrel and sucks it dry.

EXT. CITRUS BOWL FIELD

Bobby leads the offense out onto the field, to the spot where Derek recovered the onsides kick. The crowd noise is now deafening.

Red sends in a linebacker with instructions.

RED
Watch for the fake to Bobby. But if they do give it to him, I don't care if you have to stab him: do not let that half-wit get anywhere.

On the field, Bobby lines up beside Gee, in the running back's position. Gee takes one last look back at Bobby, then crouches down.

CONTINUED:

GEE
2-85! 2-85! Hut-hut-hike!

IN SLOW MOTION, WE SEE the following:

Gee fades back.

The General players on the sidelines all stand up.

Gee hands off to Bobby.

Walter, Paco and Farmer Fran jump up and down like idiots.

Bobby runs toward scrimmage.

Coach covers his face with his hands.

Bobby suddenly stops and fades back.

Red, realizing what's happening, starts screaming.

Gee runs wide open down the sideline.

Something on the sidelines catches Bobby's eye.

It's Mama. She smiles.

Bobby smiles, rears back and chucks the ball.

The scoreboard clock goes to :00.

The ball flies the air.

Red starts strangling the Cougar Mascot.

Vicki is again smiling trance-like

The ball lands on Gee's fingertips. He bobbles it, almost drops it, but clutches it to his chest and falls onto the turf in the middle of the end zone.

The crowd roars deafeningly, and the screen goes black.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MANHATTAN SKYLINE - DAY - EST.

A helicoptor shot of the world's most famous skyline.

INT. CLUB - DAY

We hear GEORGE PLIMPTON as WE PAN down a dais.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE PLIMPTON
It was, finally, a season to remember, a season where those who dared to dream saw those dreams come to life,...

We pan past Derek and Lyle.

GEORGE PLIMPTON
...where those who doubted saw the light,...

We pan past Gee.

GEORGE PLIMPTON
...where those who mocked were forgiven,...

We pan past Captain Insano.

GEORGE PLIMPTON
...where those who had given up found hope...

We pan past Coach.

GEORGE PLIMPTON
...and love,...

We see that Coach is holding hands with Mama.

GEORGE PLIMPTON
...where those who were afraid of loss found the courage to let go,...

We see Mama look lovingly to her left.

GEORGE PLIMPTON
...where those who correctly predicted the final score of the Citrus Bowl got a job doing astrology on Good Morning America,...

We pan past Vicki, who is standing next to the podium.

GEORGE PLIMPTON
...and where a thirty-year-old freshman from Jackson's Bayou, Louisiana, could be the College Football Player of the Year.

CONTINUED:

We pan to Bobby and George Plimpton, at the podium. George Plimpton hands a trophy to Bobby and shakes his hand. Bobby steps to the mic amidst thunderous applause.

BOBBY
I love my Mama!

THE END